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# The Mature Novels of Evelyn Waugh

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THE MATURE NOVELS OF EVELYN WAUGH

by

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A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF  
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## PREFACE

The beginnings of this study go back to Christmas of 1950 when I first read Brideshead Revisited. The great delight I had in the book on that first reading increased as in each successive rereading I saw new facets of excellence or greater richness in those aspects which had already delighted me. After that first reading of Brideshead, I read all of Waugh's earlier novels and eagerly awaited each succeeding novel. The acquaintance thus begun has worn well. Though the sharp pleasure of expectation does not survive after a first reading, sturdier pleasures have remained and have grown more satisfying with the years. The first reason, then, for this study is simply the delight I find in reading and talking about Waugh's novels.

The second reason for the study, probably a more valid reason, is that the thrust of most existing criticism of Waugh's work is, in my opinion, misdirected. Consequently, Waugh's most important works, those which I will term his mature novels, are presently undervalued. There has been a tendency to focus critical attention on Waugh's earlier novels, those written before Brideshead, and to regard him primarily, and in some instances exclusively, as an entertainer or a satirist. While it is undeniable that Waugh is a satirist, too great an insistence on satire misses much of the positive achievement in his mature novels. The most recent full-length study of Waugh's work, a book by James F. Carens,<sup>1</sup> offers a case in point. Another kind of misdirection results from some critics' strong reactions against Waugh's religion and politics. These critics find it difficult to refrain from reading what they believe to be the man into his works. Donat O'Donnell<sup>2</sup> represents an extreme of this

position, which is to some degree the position of Edmund Wilson,<sup>3</sup> Dame Rose Macaulay,<sup>4</sup> and Bernard Bergonzi.<sup>5</sup> Thomas Paine Churchill, in an unpublished dissertation,<sup>6</sup> eschews both of the above-mentioned misdirections, but his polite agnosticism, which he hoped would insure objectivity to his study, kept him from grappling with the most important concerns.

Of the full-length treatments of Waugh's work to date, Malcolm Bradbury's<sup>7</sup> is the most readable. Its length, unfortunately, does not permit the full critical analysis which the mature novels deserve. Robert Dale McCay's unpublished dissertation<sup>8</sup> is a very insightful piece of work, but unfortunately only one of the three Crouchback novels, which in a recension completed shortly before Waugh's death became Sword of Honour, had been published before his writing. The first of the full-length studies, Frederick J. Stopp's,<sup>9</sup> remains the best. It is the most profound and fullest in detail to date; Stopp too, however, had only two of the three Crouchback novels to work with, and his treatment of Brideshead is the most unsatisfactory portion of his otherwise fine book.

The best achievements in Waugh criticism have been in the handling of the novels written before Brideshead. Examinations of the targets of Waugh's satirical thrusts and the techniques he employs in carrying out these thrusts have been extensive. Nigel Dennis' article<sup>10</sup> and Robert Murray Davis' unpublished dissertation<sup>11</sup> provide two examples of the good work done in the area of analyzing techniques. To dwell at length, therefore, on the earlier novels would be going over ground already well-covered.

What is needed in Waugh criticism is a thorough examination of his mature novels, for if Waugh is to be regarded as a major novelist, as I believe he is, his reputation must rest upon the works of his maturity. Just prior to

his writing Men at Arms, the first Crouchback novel, in an article defending Ernest Hemingway against the critics, Waugh wrote: "The hero is fifty-one years of age, when the civilized man is just beginning the most fruitful period of his life."<sup>12</sup> Waugh was forty-seven years of age when he wrote this, and, if he was anything, he was a civilized man.

By the mature novels I mean Brideshead and the Crouchback novels, Men at Arms, Officers and Gentlemen, and Unconditional Surrender, which were gathered into Sword of Honour. The main criterion for deciding which are the mature novels is the fullness with which they represent the human situation, which to Waugh himself "means only one thing, man in his relation to God."<sup>13</sup> Brideshead is the first of the novels in which the religious dimension is a significant factor, so it is the first of the mature novels. Put Out More Flags and the unfinished "Work Suspended" form the transition from the early to the mature novels. Helena certainly deals with man's relationship to God, but another corollary criterion prevents it from being considered in a full sense a mature novel. Msgr. Ronald Knox, a great friend of Waugh's and an astute commentator on his work, says of the early novels: "They were of a kind which never allowed you to forget that this was a show being put on for your benefit; it was revue, not drama." He continues: "With Helena, you could not tell, a novel in fancy dress can never give the full illusion of reality."<sup>14</sup> The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold is subtitled "A Conversation Piece," and it along with The Loved One and Scott-King's Modern Europe is in all ways too slender for serious consideration.

If we are to attempt a reasonably thorough examination of these mature novels of Waugh's, we must follow a method suitable for the task. Such a method is outlined by Dorothy Van Ghent:

The sound novel, like a sound world, has to hang together as one thing. It has to have integral structure. Part of our evaluative judgment is based on its ability to hang together for us. And like a world, a novel has individual character; it has, peculiar to itself, its own tensions, physiognomy, and atmosphere. Part of our judgment is based on the concreteness, distinctness, and richness of that character. Finally, we judge a novel also by the cogency and illuminative quality of the view of life that it affords, the idea embodied in its cosmology. Our only adequate preparation for judging a novel evaluatively is through the analytical testing of its unity, of its characterizing qualities, and of its meaningfulness--its ability to make us more aware of the meaning of our lives.<sup>15</sup>

Consequently, Chapters I and III will examine Brideshead and Sword of Honour respectively for the integrity of their structures; Chapters II and IV will examine Brideshead and Sword of Honour respectively to see how their "concreteness, distinctness, and richness" is revealed in and through their imagery; Chapters V through IX will deal mainly with "meaningfulness" as revealed in and through recurring themes. Though all of Waugh's novels must be considered here, the stress will remain on the mature novels. Chapter X, the conclusion, will summarize our findings.

It is evident that such a method concerns itself primarily with close analysis of the text. While there will be no special interest in historical criticism, since no work exists in a vacuum, note must be made of influences and main currents in the literature of the times and where Waugh can be placed in relation to them. I will avoid biographical criticism as a dark region of shifting quicksands where only a trained psychologist dare enter.<sup>16</sup>

Acknowledgment and thanks are due to the following: K. Basil O'Leary for first introducing me to Brideshead; The Danforth Foundation for their generous grant which enabled me to embark on this study; Professor Joseph J. Wolff for his patient and considerate direction; and most of all my wife for her encouragement, constructive criticism, and typing of the several drafts of

this study--all in circumstances frequently trying.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>James F. Carens, The Satiric Art of Evelyn Waugh (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1966). Steven Marcus, "Evelyn Waugh and the Art of Entertainment," Partisan Review, XXIII (Summer, 1956), 348-57, regards Waugh as merely an entertainer.

<sup>2</sup>Donat O'Donnell, Maria Cross (New York: Oxford University Press, 1952), pp. 117-34.

<sup>3</sup>Edmund Wilson, Classics and Commercials (New York: Farrar, Straus and Company, 1950), pp. 298-305.

<sup>4</sup>Dame Rose Macaulay, "Evelyn Waugh," Horizon, XIV (December, 1946), 360-76.

<sup>5</sup>Bernard Bergonzi, "Evelyn Waugh's Gentleman," The Critical Quarterly, V (Spring, 1963), 23-36.

<sup>6</sup>Thomas Paine Churchill, "The House of Evelyn Waugh: A Critical Study of Evelyn Waugh's Major Novels" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Washington, 1963).

<sup>7</sup>Malcolm Bradbury, Evelyn Waugh (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1964).

<sup>8</sup>Robert Dale McCay, "Idea and Pattern in the Novels of Evelyn Waugh" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, State University of Iowa, 1953).

<sup>9</sup>Frederick J. Stopp, Evelyn Waugh: Portrait of an Artist (London: Chapman and Hall Ltd., 1958).

<sup>10</sup>Nigel Dennis, "Evelyn Waugh: The Pillar of Anchorage House," Partisan Review, X (July-August, 1943), 350-61.

<sup>11</sup>Robert Murray Davis, "The Externalist Method in the Novels of Ronald Firbank, Carl Van Vechten, and Evelyn Waugh" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1964).

<sup>12</sup>Evelyn Waugh, "The Case of Mr. Hemingway," Commonweal, LIII (November 3, 1950), 98.

<sup>13</sup>Evelyn Waugh, "Fan-Fare," Life, XX (April 8, 1946), 56.

<sup>14</sup>Msgr. Ronald Knox, "The Reader Suspended," Month, ns., VIII (October, 1952), 237.

15Dorothy Van Ghent, The English Novel: Form and Function (New York: Rinehart & Company, Inc., 1953), pp. 6-7.

16Even psychologists had best be wary of grappling with Waugh; he denies their science's existence: "Psychology---there isn't such a thing as psychology. Like the word slenderizing. There isn't such a word. The whole thing's a fraud" (Waugh's conversation as reported in Harvey Breit, The Writer Observed [Cleveland: World Publishing Company, 1956], p. 45).

## CHAPTER I

### BRIDESHEAD REVISITED: THE STRUCTURE

"Only through time time is conquered."

--T. S. Eliot: "Burnt Norton"

Perhaps from the time that Henry James began to analyze the problems of the novelist's art in his notebooks, and most certainly since the publication of Wayne Booth's The Rhetoric of Fiction,<sup>1</sup> we have come to expect from a successful novel a certain uniqueness, which forces the novelist to discover the particular narrative techniques that will allow that uniqueness to develop to its fullest. The structure of a distinguished novel, therefore, will be something that is peculiar to itself. To partially substantiate the claim that Brideshead Revisited<sup>2</sup> is a distinguished novel, we shall, in this chapter, attempt: (1) to state what constitutes the wholeness of Brideshead's plot and to indicate how this whole differs radically from those of Waugh's earlier novels; (2) to advance an organizational principle by the light of which we can show that the parts of the novel are proportionate to each other and to the whole; (3) to show that the structure of the novel's original version is superior to that of the revised edition of 1960, because it is more completely consonant with the organizational principle and appropriate to the whole of the novel; (4) and finally, to supply a chapter by chapter analysis of the plot in terms of structural proportion.

## I

To satisfactorily grasp the wholeness of a novel's structure, it is



helpful to first recognize, in a general way, that novel's subject matter and theme. This is in some ways analogous to having a knowledge of the raw materials used in and the intended function of an architectural structure. Stated quite baldly, the subject matter of Brideshead Revisited is marriage, as the title itself suggests.<sup>3</sup> The novel pictures many kinds of marriage: rash marriage, broken marriage, incomplete marriage, pseudo-marriage, and the mystical marriage of Christ with the members of His Church. Marriage, especially Christian marriage proper and the mystical marriage of Christ with the members of His Church, is at the same time both a consummation of love and the promise of love's permanence. "The sacred and profane memories of Captain Charles Ryder," as several editions are sub-titled,<sup>4</sup> are memories of consummations and promises in sacred and profane marriages. The memories record consummations of varying degrees of intensity and the bendings and breakings of the promise, all of which lead to the promise (in one aspect unbreakable) of a final, lasting consummation. Such a promise is, indeed, implied in Waugh's own statement of the novel's theme: "The operation of divine grace on a group of diverse but closely connected characters."<sup>5</sup>

Bearing in mind the seriousness of the subject matter and theme we can proceed, by adapting Ronald Crane's sentence on the wholeness of plot in Tom Jones,<sup>6</sup> to state what constitutes the unique wholeness of Brideshead's plot. The wholeness consists in the dynamic system of actions, extending throughout the novel, by which the divergent intentions and beliefs of a number of persons of different characters and states of faith belonging to or somehow related to the Flyte family are made to cooperate with the urgings of Providence, first to bring Charles Ryder into an incomplete and precarious union, founded on an affinity of feeling in spite of a disparity of faith, with Sebastian and then

with Julia; then to separate him from them through actions that impel both Sebastian and Julia to revise their fundamental personal values of religious faith, love, and marriage; and finally, by means of the whole process to bring these three characters to an acceptance of the unbreakable promise and an expectation, however slight, of the final consummation of religious love.

In order to enlarge our understanding of Waugh's achievement in Brideshead, before advancing the organizational principle by which the parts of this profoundly serious whole can be seen to relate proportionately to each other and to the whole, we shall examine the contrast offered by the total conception of his earlier "satirical" novels.

At the time he was writing Brideshead, Waugh's critical reputation was considerable. Edmund Wilson had written of him in an article dated March 4, 1944:

My feeling is that these novels of Waugh's are the only things written in England that are comparable to Fitzgerald and Hemingway. They are not so poetic; they are perhaps less intense; they belong to a more classical tradition. But I think that they are likely to last and that Waugh, in fact, is likely to figure as the only first-rate comic genius that has appeared in English since Bernard Shaw.<sup>7</sup>

Though Wilson's is, perhaps, the most glowing evaluation, there were other examples of very favorable critical recognition.<sup>8</sup>

The critics who consider the early satires Waugh's best work<sup>9</sup> have universally admired their tone of clever, ironic detachment. The objects of Waugh's satirical thrusts, which include most of modern society's institutions, marriage, education, government, the press, class distinction, etc., are rigged out and put through their paces like marionettes "accompanied," as Nigel Dennis has put it, "by one slight of hand after another." Dennis praises Waugh "for his dexterity when, five characters in each hand, he can develop, in smoothly

interlocking conversations and exits and entries, the reader's understanding of his people, their immediate situation, and the theme of the novel."<sup>10</sup> Certainly part of a showman's charm and fascination is his detachment, the cool nonchalance with which he keeps his puppets, plates, oranges, or whatever spinning; but, as Msgr. Ronald Knox has said about these early novels, they constitute "revue, not drama."<sup>11</sup>

What the showman of the revue or the circus deals with is a kind of privileged unreality, a suspension of the concerns and duties of normal, everyday living. The showman's immediate aim is the sharp intake of breath, the tribute paid to inordinate dexterity, or the laugh in all its variations from the chuckle to the roar. If the showman's art happens to be closely related to the business of human life, as is the art of the clown or the puppeteer, there is a residuum of serious commentary on life, which frequently remains with us after we have left their privileged sphere and returned to our everyday concerns. While this residuum may well be the most endearing and most prized aspect of their art, it is still not the immediate concern, the primary end, of that art.

The showman knows that there are many techniques or tricks, a whole bagful of them, which, properly used, will get him his laugh or his intake of breath every time. His first job is to select those tricks which will serve his turn best; his second job is to perfect his usage of them. The good showman also knows that the secret of continued success is the proper blending of repetition and variation. There must be certain bits, constants in his act, which the audience will come to identify with the showman, but these pieces of business must be presented within a variety of situations and shaded with different nuances at every performance.

Waugh the satirist is Waugh the showman. He had mastered much of the showman's art when he wrote Decline and Fall, the first of his satires. Already present are four major constants of his satiric art: (1) the basic situation of ingenue and/or exploiter in confrontation with the inanity and insanity of modern society; (2) the use of stichomythic passages of dialogue to convey the atmosphere of a moral waste land;<sup>12</sup> (3) the use of what Nigel Dennis aptly termed "narrative flash-point,"<sup>13</sup> a number of brief, contrasting scenes occurring at the same time in a number of different places, for startling ironic effects; (4) the use of an almost wholly undramatized narrator.

A fifth element which might be considered a semi-constant is the cast of characters. Margot Metroland, a character of major importance in Decline and Fall, appears briefly in all six of the satires. Alastair Digby-Vaine-Trumpington, Margot's youthful lover at the close of Decline and Fall, and Peter Pastmaster, her son, appear also in Black Mischief and Put Out More Flags. The central character of these last two novels mentioned is Basil Seal. There are a host of other minor characters that continue to crop up in book after book: Angela Lyne, Lady Chasm, Lady Circumference, Mrs. Beaver, Lord Copper, Miles Malpractice, and David Lennox. Lord Copper, the newspaper magnate of Scoop, carried over into Brideshead; and Julia Stitch, the dispenser of confused white magic in Scoop, continues to play her sorceress's role, though not so innocently, in Sword of Honour. With these characters Waugh has created a world of his own, a comic world of London's Mayfair and St. James in the late 'twenties and the 'thirties.

Of the four constantly present elements, the undramatized narrator is the most important, since the possible variations in this narrator's attitude towards both the characters in the novel and towards the reader greatly affect

the work's total conception. In Decline and Fall the narrator's attitude, as Wayne Booth points out, is "a bland or mildly amused or merely curious detachment."<sup>14</sup> Booth also calls attention to the narrator's one generalizing intrusion into the story:<sup>15</sup>

In fact, the whole of this book is really an account of the mysterious disappearance of Paul Pennyfeather, so that readers must not complain if the shadow which took his name does not amply fill the important part of hero for which he was originally cast.<sup>16</sup>

The tone is "bland and mild and detached." It is the attitude in which the whole work is conceived.

In Vile Bodies, Waugh's second novel, the narrator's tone does not always remain so bland and detached. The one generalizing intrusion, inserted parenthetically into the novel, strikes Waugh's first unambiguous moralizing note: "(. . . Masked parties, Savage parties, Victorian parties, Greek parties . . . all that succession and repetition of massed humanity. . . . Those vile bodies . . .)." <sup>17</sup> While this intrusion is in keeping with the frenzied pursuit of pleasure by the Bright Young People, who are satirized in the novel, it suggests not mild amusement, but revulsion. While there are wilder gusts of laughter in Vile Bodies than there are in Decline and Fall, nevertheless, hints of regret and concern and the possibility of seriousness lurk beneath the surface of Vile Bodies.

The succeeding two novels, Black Mischief and A Handful of Dust, the most tough-minded<sup>18</sup> and bitter of the early works, are devoid of direct intrusions by the narrator. In A Handful of Dust Waugh's satire is at its finest, thoroughly scathing. The animal imagery with which it concludes is worthy of Swift. We are told that a silver fox vixen who had lost her brush by sticking it into another fox's cage seems little the worse for her accident. At first

this might seem an exact paralleling of Brenda's, the human vixen's, situation, but the satire is more biting. Foxes, unlike horses, have never been considered noble animals, yet, in Waugh's book, even their behavior is more moral than human behavior. If there is no virtue to be rewarded in either society, at least among the foxes wrong-doing is punished directly. Society does not punish Brenda in any way, though it may deplore her taste in lovers. In fact, Brenda turns the brief period of discomfiture, which she brings upon herself, into a form of self-indulgence. The last we hear of her, before being told in the final chapter that she is the happy bride of Jock Grant-Menzies, is: "For weeks she had attempted to keep a fair mind towards Tony and his treatment of her; now at last she broke down and turning over buried her face in the pillow, in an agony of resentment and self-pity."<sup>19</sup>

The titles of these two novels give, perhaps, the best indication of their total conceptions. Black Mischief is a falling off in seriousness from black magic. Mischief has to do either with behavior that is childish in the natural order or elf-like in the preternatural order. Magic, on the other hand, smacks of the diabolic and the religious or supernatural order. The novel ends with a song, a song in which a bird is asked a puzzling question. There is something of religious ritual about birds and the unknown, but what for the Greeks was a serious religious business is here a mockery. The song is Gilbert and Sullivan's "Tit-Willow." Despite all their wild carryings-on, Basil Seal, the Emperor Seth, et al., can neither know the will of Heaven nor raise the devil in Azania.

A Handful of Dust, a quotation from the Bible by way of Eliot's The Waste Land, presages a more serious work. The dust is man, both individually and collectively, in the state of dissolution that is the modern waste land.

Dissolution and fear permeate Waugh's novel as they do the first three sections of Eliot's poem, and for the same reason: man has lost vital religion.<sup>20</sup> However, there is no explicit statement that modern man needs religion, needs God. We are shown only the waste land, its boredom, and the terror that lurks beneath the boredom---a wholly negative statement.

Three years elapse between A Handful of Dust (1934) and the appearance of the next novel, Scoop (1937). Scoop is much brighter in tone; it is really a light-hearted farce, the sunniest of the early novels. Though we may find statements which the intervening years have shown to be all too sober truths (for example, communism and fascism are basically the same evil frauds with slightly different trappings), Scoop delivers them in such a burlesque fashion that we are not at all disturbed. The book's sunshine comes from its innocent hero, William Boot, who wins almost a complete victory over the insane modern world. It is significant, however, that the one area in which he suffers defeat is love. The narrator's sympathies are with William Boot when he is pitted against the modern press and politics, but the narrator does not completely approve of William. Back in what he considers to be the safety of his home, Boot Magna, William leaves off writing his column, Lush Places, with the clause, "maternal rodents pilot their furry brood through the stubble. . . ." The novel's final sentence is the narrator's grim judgment: "Outside the owls hunted maternal rodents and their furry broods."<sup>21</sup>

There are five years between Scoop and Put Out More Flags (1942), the last of the "satiric" novels before Brideshead. In 1941 Waugh wrote a considerable portion of a novel (almost half, if one can judge by both the sequence of events and the length of the rest of Waugh's fiction), which was published in the collection Tactical Exercise<sup>22</sup> under the title "Work Suspended." Put

Out More Flags and "Work Suspended" are the transitional works from the early to the mature Waugh. As a result, in our actual treatment of the mature novels, more references will be made to these two works than to any of the other early works. There are a number of similarities both in characters and in situations between these two works and the mature novels.

Since an uncompleted work has no wholeness, what is of most interest to our particular inquiry in "Work Suspended" is the shift in narrative technique, a shift which heralds the technique of Brideshead, and an increased seriousness of the subject matter. In "Work Suspended" Waugh, for the first time, chooses to dramatize his narrator. The story is told in the first person by John Plant, a writer of carefully constructed detective fiction. Plant is very much aware of himself as narrator:

To write of someone loved, of oneself loving, above all of oneself being loved--how can these things be done with propriety? . . . --how can one relate this hooded stranger to the men and women with whom he keeps pace? It is a problem beyond the proper scope of letters.<sup>23</sup>

The image of the hooded stranger, reminiscent of Christ on the road to Emmaus, suggests that Waugh's work is about to emerge from the waste land of A Handful of Dust, and the willingness to confront a problem "beyond the proper scope of letters" suggests an advance from the frivolity of Scoop.

In Put Out More Flags Waugh returns to an undramatized narrator, "flash-point," stichomythia, and Basil Seal, the exploiter. His tone, however, is somewhat altered from Black Mischief. The narrator's approval of Basil Seal, Peter Pastmaster, and Alastair-Digby-Vaine-Trumpington in their response to the call to arms is thoroughgoing. The narrator intrudes with greater frequency, especially toward the end of the novel, to register his approval. The two most important intrusions occur after two speeches of the frivolous and silly Sir



Joseph Mainwaring. The first of these speeches concludes: "The war has entered into a new and more glorious phase." To which the narrator responds: "And in this last statement, perhaps for the first time in his long and loquacious life Sir Joseph approximated to reality; he had said a mouthful." The second, commenting on Sir Joseph's statement of a new spirit being abroad, concludes the novel: "And, poor booby, he was bang right."<sup>24</sup>

The particular type of patriotism implied in these two intrusions, when they are seen in context, justifies Nigel Dennis' charge that Waugh is guilty of snobbery when he allows rakes and playboys to be part of the "new Spirit," while socialist radicals are excluded.<sup>25</sup> However, the real test of this new spirit is to be seen in Sword of Honour.

Once more the whole intent might best be seen in terms of the novel's title, Put Out More Flags. The phrase appears in the epigraph, taken from the words of a Chinese sage, quoted by Lin Yutang in The Importance of Living: "A man getting drunk at a farewell party should strike a musical tone, in order to strengthen his spirit . . . and a drunk military man should order gallons and put out more flags in order to increase his military splendour." The book is a lark, a high spirited bash, on the part of characters who had ripped through the 'twenties, largely languished in the 'thirties, and now feel rejuvenated at the call to arms. At the time it was being written, England's war-time spirit needed rejuvenating.

Thus, of the six novels written prior to Brideshead, only A Handful of Dust can lay any claim to full seriousness, and its explicit statement is wholly negative. The tone of the undramatized narrator is generally detached and runs a gamut from mild amusement to the bitterest irony.

In addition to the narrator's tone and his distance from his tale, the

contrast in the treatment of particular areas of subject matter appearing in both the early novels and Brideshead may serve as a further aid to our understanding of Brideshead's uniqueness. We have said that marriage is the subject matter of Brideshead; it is also present as subject matter, raw material, in the early novels. In fact, it is perdurable as an object of satire in all of Waugh's work prior to Brideshead. There is a good deal of truth in Christopher Hollis' observation: "He who comes into life from a broken or incomplete family comes into life to that extent an incomplete man, and modern society, as Mr. Waugh sees it . . . is essentially a society of incomplete men and women."<sup>26</sup> Waugh in the early novels gives us a fanciful, often fantastic, always highly colored picture of incomplete society. There may be a serious purpose at work behind it all, as there frequently is in satire (Juvenal, Thomas More, Swift, etc.), but Waugh is under no obligation to be affirmative, to present even a hint of completion. We--from our own experience, perhaps it is common experience--may supply for ourselves something affirmative in response to his negative presentation; but that is our own affair.

In Decline and Fall the breakdown of marriage is handled with a dash of the macabre and a sprinkling of fancy. The husband of Margot Beste-Chetwynde (Metroland) dies in suspicious circumstances, the implication being that Margot did him in. The homosexual Grimes marries Dr. Fagan's elder daughter as a last resort to keep from getting "in the soup." Margot asks her son Peter to choose who among her lovers will be her next husband. It is all rather rollicking fun, but a strong note of bitter disillusionment enters in Peter's drink-fuddled dialogue at the close of the novel. In the space of only a page he refers to his mother five times by her new, despised name, Margot Metroland. In the same space he refers to Alastair as Margot's "young man" three times.<sup>27</sup> For all his

man-of-the-world ways Peter is an outraged innocent.

In Vile Bodies the confusion of decayed marriage among the older generation is more wildly comic than anything in Decline and Fall. Sons avoid their mothers, and mothers fail to recognize their sons or to even remember their names. Lord Metroland remains unperturbed that Margot is carrying on with young Trumpington. He does go into his study, upon returning from a party and seeing Alastair's tall hat on the table by the door, only because "it would be awkward if he met young Trumpington on the stairs." Ursula, the elder daughter of the Duchess of Style, a palely beautiful girl who appears only briefly, is dragooned into an unwanted marriage by her mother, thus setting up another cycle of marital decay and dry rot. Saddest of all is the case of Adam and Nina. Of course they are flighty Bright Young People, but there is enough decency in them to excite some sympathy. Adam, dancing alone in Margot's hall, thinking that he has a check which will enable him to marry Nina the next day, is endearing. The scene touches Nina: "You did look happy, you know, Adam, and so sweet. I think I really fell in love with you for the first time when I saw you dancing alone in the hall."<sup>28</sup> Unfortunately the spark of decency does not have a chance; everything else, including the check in question, is "bogus." Adam later sells his claim to marry Nina to his friend Ginger Littlejohn in order to pay his hotel bill. He and Nina end by cuckolding Ginger, who, unlike Metroland, cares. At the close of the novel the world is in a state of war, and Nina is carrying Adam's child.

Of all the works, marriage is least important in Black Mischief. Basil Seal is an exploiter of women, but for the time he is keeping clear of marriage, except, of course, for his liaison with Mrs. Angela Lyne. Basil's mother suggests that her husband's death has deprived Basil of proper guidance. This

idea fits well with the theory advanced above by Christopher Hollis, but it does not fit with Basil's character. There is, however, the best marriage Waugh will portray before Sword of Honour sketched for us here. It may not draw huzzahs of approval from people who applauded The Feminine Mystique, but General Connolly and Black Bitch, the people involved in the marriage, seem quite happy with each other. At the novel's close, modern society, in the persons of United Nations' representatives, unwilling to acknowledge the value of the Connolly's contentment, is determined to break up the marriage.

It is quite difficult in a brief space to adequately describe the complete dissolution of Christian marriage portrayed in A Handful of Dust. Part of the novel's effect comes from the fact that the characters are more fully "rounded"; they have less of the air of fantasy. Because of the lack of everyday concerns in Vile Bodies, the immediate effect of Adam's selling Nina to Ginger in order to pay his hotel bill (which includes great quantities of champagne) is wildly funny. The same sort of scene in A Handful of Dust, Tony's discussing the financial arrangements of divorce with his brother-in-law, has a painful, hollow effect--the thin crust covering the great void. Tony is at his most perceptive when he responds to his brother-in-law: "So what your proposal really amounts to is that I should give up Hetton in order to buy Beaver [his wife's lover] for Brenda." In previous novels only the upper classes were pilloried for the breakdown of marriage; now we see it among the lower orders as well. Milly, the girl Tony is to take to Brighton in order to follow proper form in divorce proceedings, wants to take along her eight-year old daughter: "She's called Winnie. I was only sixteen when I had her. I was the youngest of the family and our stepfather wouldn't leave any of us girls alone." Still the most horrifying incident is reserved for the upper

classes. When Brenda is informed that her young son John has been killed in an accident, she believes that it is John Beaver who has been killed. Upon discovering the truth she says: "John . . . John Andrew . . . I . . . Oh thank God . . . ."29

In Scoop marriage is back in the realm of wild, improbable comedy. William Boot falls in love with a girl named Kätchen. Kätchen, however, says she is married to a German. The German, however, has another wife back in Germany whom he hates. Kätchen has lived with this German for the remarkably long time of two years. She met him in the South American dance hall where she worked (shades of Margot Metroland's enterprises). Kätchen's father had gone to South America to look for her mother. In the climactic scene of their relationship, Kätchen tries to think of a multitude of plans by which William can help her and the German reach safety together. Her best effort is: "If after I marry you, I marry my husband, he would then be English, yes?"30

In the five early novels we have looked at thus far, the treatment of marriage is consonant with the narrator's tone and attitude in and toward the whole work. Such is not the case in Put Out More Flags. We have said that this work is the transition from the early to the mature novels. It is a hybrid and, as such, structurally flawed. We have already indicated that the book is something of a bash, a rowdy romp full of practical jokes, involving Basil Seal and friends. The episode of the girl at the Malt House, Grantley Green, which delighted Edmund Wilson,<sup>31</sup> is perfectly in keeping with the book's tone, but not so the story of Cedric Lyne.

We did not meet Cedric in Black Mischief, but we did encounter his wife Angela, who then, as now, was conducting an affair with Basil Seal. While the objective facts of the situation are the same as the Tony-Brenda-Beaver tri-

angle in A Handful of Dust, its totality is vastly different. The greatest difference lies not in the fact that where Beaver and Brenda are colorless and fragile, Basil and Angela are dashing and tough. The great difference is between Tony and Cedric, the cuckolded husbands.

There may be initial sympathy for Tony Last, but beneath the surface crust of country gentry solidity Tony is a hollow man. There are no depths to him; Tony--not his fate, which smacks of tragedy, but himself--is finally insipid. Cedric, of whom we see much less, is, in the words of his wife, "most romantic--genuinely."<sup>32</sup> Cedric, not any of the Brideshead characters as some critics have claimed,<sup>33</sup> is Waugh's portrait of romance. His portrayal abounds in sentiment and nostalgia; there is, however, that genuineness about him which makes him touching rather than maudlin. Where Tony was dedicated to Hetton out of a vague sense of tradition bound up with nursery memories, Cedric is aware of having worked to make something beautiful. He is devoted to a definite aesthetic tradition, one which might continue in his son Nigel: "He thought he saw some glimmerings of taste in the boy; he might grow to appreciate it [the house] later."<sup>34</sup>

What had drawn Cedric and Angela together was the common head they made against the crass and ugly vulgarity and callousness of the modern world. Angela, the daughter of a self-made Glasgow millionaire, had only known grasping, hard-boiled men: "And then I met Cedric who was poor and very, very soft-boiled and tall and willowy and very unhappy in a boring smart regiment because he only cared about Russian ballet and baroque architecture." Cedric is appalled at what a feeble mess David Lennox's (the fashionable homosexual artist from Decline and Fall) decorative paintings in grey monochrome have made of Regency vigor. We are not to read Angela's lines on ballet and architecture as

a description of a vapid dilettante. Cedric is a kind of champion of the individual; it is this aspect of romanticism that informs the last minutes of his life, "striding happily towards the enemy, shaking from his boots all the frustration of corporate life."<sup>35</sup>

Cedric Lyne is not the ideal man, not a complete man. He is, however, a man who commands our sympathy for the better world, albeit it would have been a small, private world of light and order and beauty, which he and Angela had tried ineffectually to create in the first days of their marriage. Sympathetic too is his desire for permanence in marriage. The grottoes with which he has decorated the grounds of his house are monuments to permanence, one for each year of the breakdown of his marriage: "Always the same; joys for ever; not like men and women with their loves and hates." Finally, he commands a measure of respect as well as sympathy, for the gift he gave, despite his own loneliness, to his lonely son:

"It's been absolutely ripping, Daddy," he said.

"Has it really?"

"The rippingest two days I ever spent."<sup>36</sup>

With Put Out More Flags Waugh articulates for the first time in a serious way a problem which will become central in the mature novels, but in this last of the early novels seriousness is out of place. He has not yet found the proper form to handle it.

Finally, before examining the organizational principle which will determine that proper form, it may be profitable to point out one more aspect which distinguishes the early novels from the mature novels. With the exception of A Handful of Dust there is a diversity of character interest within each novel. This diversity may serve a number of humorous and satiric ends well, but it prevents us from becoming absorbed in the lives of the characters. If

none of the characters is important enough to hold the author's attention, we cannot take any of them too seriously. In a sense this judgment simply concurs with Msgr. Knox's previously quoted evaluation of the works as "revue" not "drama." We have noted that Stephen Marcus, a critic not pleased with Waugh's mature work, likes these early efforts as entertainments. That part of his definition of an "entertainer's" work which maintains that it "does not press upon us the full complexities of life . . . does not demand from us a total seriousness in making moral judgments,"<sup>37</sup> does seem to apply to the six early novels.

## 2

Having stated what constitutes the wholeness of Brideshead and how that wholeness differs from the works preceding it, we must discover the principle of organization which unites the whole and through which all of the parts of this whole can be seen to be proportionate to each other.

Aubrey Menen has offered a most fruitful suggestion. Although his article deals with Waugh's Helena, the method which he suggests is even more applicable, for reasons which will be advanced, to an analysis of the structure of Brideshead. It is necessary to quote Mr. Menen at some length:

I propose to argue by analogy from one art to another: namely from Baroque sculpture to the several-centered style of Mr. Waugh. . . . I agree that it is logically insecure, but I find it enlarges my understanding. . . .

Moretti says that when we come to Michelangelo we find that a sickness has fallen upon him; a sickness "of anxiety, of terror, of a sense of the hostility of time." It is a sickness of maturity . . . "the feeling of time is a new dimension; a dimension in which he can project himself and which becomes the dominating factor in artistic expression. . . . From him, in this fashion, was born that plastic realization of temporal change which is characteristic of the Baroque."

From this sickness, Moretti goes on, springs the temporal nature of Baroque art. Time must be in some way suppressed, got round, tamed; it must somehow be stabilized. And if the sickness is part of our



human nature, then we must go beyond that nature.

"The sharp demands of this obsession with time," he goes on, "force Baroque artists to evolve a method of working by stages (plastica successiva) that unfold and dissolve one into the other something after the fashion of music. The Baroque builds up complex structures that can only be understood in a temporal manner and the unity of which can only be grasped by making an intellectual synthesis which takes place in the memory and is a thing apart from the immediate perception. . . . "

Baroque art, he says, essentially employs a method of composition in which there are two or more distinct and separate focal points. The spectator's eye travels from one to another; there is a logical progression, but the spectator will not find it mechanically. . . . In a word it is only the focal points which count: they and the progression, which, when we have it in due order, we shall find to be the whole object of the sculptor.

We shall expect to find that Mr. Waugh's book consists of a series of episodes, each complete in itself and linked with the next by an unimportant, or "flat," passage. . . . We shall expect to find these episodes going together to indicate some form of escape from the instability and change which are implicit in them.<sup>38</sup>

Exception must be taken, or qualification made, to the matter of "flat" or "unimportant" passages quoted above. There are rather "flat" passages in Helena, descriptive passages of the Roman empire at the time, which read like the work of Harold Lamb. It would be rash, however, to conclude without closer study that even these passages are "unimportant." Perhaps they merely seem unimportant. In Brideshead the linking passages are not "flat"; rather they have a zest and vitality of their own, either complementing or contrasting to the main focal points. These passages can be seen to have an important bearing on the whole, though occasionally they may seem unimportant in themselves.

One of the most striking features of the treatment of the subject matter in Brideshead, especially as compared to any of Waugh's previous works, is the complexity of the time sequence. That a concern with time informs the whole work, exerting a subtle but tremendous pressure on all the major characters,

would be difficult to deny.<sup>39</sup> To understand the special importance given to time in Brideshead, we might begin by considering the distortion in the temporal sequence of events.

The distortion of the time sequence is certainly not original with Waugh, but Brideshead is the first novel in which he has felt constrained to employ the device. Earlier novelists, Tolstoy and Conrad for example, employed the technique to plumb intricate moral or metaphysical matters. Waugh's choices of this particular framing device is indicative that Brideshead involves a complexity absent from his earlier novels.

In Brideshead the time sequence is laid out roughly as follows: we are presented with a prologue and an epilogue which are in the present and a body which begins at a certain point in the past and works its way by irregular advances and retreats. The body opens at a certain point in the past, then retreats to a point further past; Chapter Seven of Book I breaks off the generally regular advance of time to go back and tell the story of Julia's life and her relationship with Rex Mottram during the previous two years; Book II opens and we discover ten years have elapsed; we gradually learn, here and there, a number of significant happenings during those ten years; and throughout the body of the novel the narrator intrudes, from time to time, for the space of one sentence to snap us back to the present. Since Waugh is a very conscious craftsman,<sup>40</sup> we can presume that there is a conscious purpose at work in all this distortion of time.

What Waugh has done in Brideshead is to give us in his dramatized, first-person narrator the element that Menen looks for as the completion of the baroque artistic experience: the synthesizing memory which grasps the unity of the whole. The shifts in the time sequence show us Charles Ryder's memory

operating on his experience and synthesizing it before our eyes. The synthesis achieved by Ryder's memory, in one sense, is the book. But finally there is an element which transcends Ryder's synthesis, that only we as readers can supply, a judgment of the soundness of Ryder's synthesis at every stage of its development.

Here is a complexity and inventiveness in the handling of time and dramatic situation that is characteristically baroque.<sup>41</sup> It is not complexity for its own sake, for, as Menen's theory suggests, the attempt to transcend time and achieve stability, to reconcile time with the timeless, requires an unusual complexity. That memory itself is the apt vehicle for such an attempt has also been expressed by T. S. Eliot in "Burnt Norton":

Time present and time past  
Are both perhaps present in time future,  
And time future contained in time past.  
.....  
What might have been and what has been  
Point to one end, which is always present.  
Footfalls echo in the memory.

Memory is perhaps the only novelistic device which can express the experience of the past, the actuality of the present, and the expectation of the future at the same moment.

Any device, regardless of its inventiveness or complexity, does not work automatically. What is more important is the quality of the particular memory that is being employed. Charles Ryder has been called by various critics a snob, a weakling, and a brute.<sup>42</sup> He may or may not be any or all of these things; only a close examination of his words and actions will reveal the facts. Here we are only considering if he has any qualities which especially recommend him as a "synthesizing memory."

We might first note that he is an artist and therefore probably

sensitive in registering impressions. The fact that architectural painting is his metier indicates that he might be particularly sensitive to structures. When, upon looking a little closer, we discover that the final stage in his artistic "conversion" is to the baroque,<sup>43</sup> we find a sensibility and a memory admirably designed to handle the problem of time and the type of structure proposed by Mr. Menen.

One of the advantages of telling a story from the first person point of view, regardless of the quality of the narrator's memory or sensibility, is the sense of emotional immediacy and unity that is conveyed. If the experiences being related are congenial to the reader, he will generally grant an immediate, strong, emotionally favorable response. Obversely, the danger of the technique is that if the reader finds the experiences uncongenial, he is likely to reject them quite easily as having no objective validity.

As has already been indicated, Edmund Wilson and Dame Rose Macaulay have felt that Waugh sacrificed too much in abandoning the ironic "detachment" inherent in his earlier narrative style.<sup>44</sup> However, in the particular quality of his dramatized personal narrator, Waugh has attempted to forestall such criticism. Apparently by nature, and certainly by the conditions of his upbringing, Charles Ryder is not a man given to spontaneous emotional gushings. Again, there is something in his very artistic metier, architectural painting, that indicates an observer, skilled at structural analysis; but above all there is a marked "detachment" in the very way in which his mind habitually works. It is a quality which Julia recognizes and comes, at times, to detest. She says:

"Oh, don't talk in that damned bounderish way. Why must you see every thing second hand? Why must this be a play? Why must my conscience be a Pre-Raphaelite picture?"

"It's a way I have."

"I hate it."<sup>45</sup>

Certainly this habit of seeing one's own experience as being like something else can be exasperating in a lover, but it does bespeak a degree of detachment desirable in an observer and recorder. The terms of the comparisons made, as they continue to unfold throughout the book, begin to indicate a tradition, the Christian tradition of Western civilization, against which Ryder may judge the significance of his own experience.

There is another side to Ryder, as there must be to any character who is not simply "flat," in Mr. E. M. Forster's sense of the word.<sup>46</sup> Ryder is continually falling in love; he repeatedly contracts marriages, of one sort or another. Waugh, working within a tradition in the English novel established in the eighteenth century and confirmed by the Victorians, prepares us to accept Charles's paradoxical inclinations by his use of heredity: a mother whose ardent sympathies led to the sacrifice of her own life in Serbia with the Red Cross, and a grotesquely comic father who collects antiquities and whose concept of paternal relationship is "internecine" strife.<sup>47</sup> If we add to this that Charles is at least intelligent enough to get by fairly well at Oxford without much effort, we have the basic outline of the consciousness that will be our synthesizing memory.

The importance to Waugh of this switch to a dramatized narrator as the organizing principle of the novel can be glimpsed from his reaction when something of the same sort occurs in the work of Graham Greene. Reviewing The End of the Affair, Waugh states:

But the great change in this new adventure is the method of telling. For the first time there is a narrator; everything is seen through his eyes and with his limitations. Instead of an omniscient and impersonal recorder we have the chief character giving his distorted vision; a narrator who is himself in the course of evolution.<sup>48</sup>

This, then, is Brideshead's principle of organization, the particularly well-qualified memory of Charles Ryder.<sup>49</sup> The following section, dealing with the appropriateness of Brideshead's original structure, will attempt to show that this synthesizing memory dwells on two major points of focus.

## 3

How many major parts, points of focus in our structural terms, does Brideshead have? In answering this question we encounter a rather unusual problem: it appears that the author himself was not sure. Waugh's uncertainty led to a revision of the novel in 1960 in which the structure is seriously altered. In a preface to the edition, explaining his motives for revision, Waugh states:

I am less happy about its form, whose more glaring defects may be blamed on the circumstances in which it was written. . . . I wrote with a zest that was quite strange to me and also with impatience to get back to the war. It was a bleak period of present privation and threatening disaster--the period of soya beans and Basic English--and in consequence the book is infused with a kind of gluttony, for food and wine, for the splendours of the recent past, and for rhetorical and ornamental language, which now with a full stomach I find distasteful. I have modified the grosser passages but have not obliterated them because they are an essential part of the book.<sup>50</sup>

In addition to making a number of changes in diction along the lines indicated in the quotation from the preface, Waugh's conception of the novel's structure changes from a two-part to a three-part structure. In the original version, the body of the novel, all the remembered past experience, was divided into two books entitled "Et in Arcadia Ego" and "A Twitch Upon the Thread." In the revised version what had been chapters six, seven, and eight of Book I were grouped together as Book II entitled "Brideshead Deserted," and the original Book II became Book III.

Almost all of the changes, especially the new concept of structure,

represent a considerable falling off from the original. Waugh should have had more confidence in the "zest" that was "quite strange" to him. Curiously enough, there is a passage in Brideshead which, if taken analogously, could explain the original "zest" and the later reactions. It is part of the key passage at the opening of the final book, the passage on the value and function of memory:

These hours of afflatus in the human spirit, the springs of art, are, in their mystery, akin to the epochs of history, when a race which has lived for centuries content . . . will, for a generation or two, stupefy the world . . . leave behind a record of new heights scaled and new rewards won for all mankind; the vision fades, the soul sickens, and the routine of survival starts again.<sup>51</sup>

It is difficult to see what Waugh hoped to achieve by forcing the material into the new three-part structure. While it is true that the three parts give a mechanical surface symmetry, three books of almost equal lengths, such a surface is false, as we hope to show, to the wholeness, the principle of organization, and the meaning of the novel.

However, Waugh's desire to revise can be understood if not approved. The revision can be seen as an example of the literary artist's difficulty as articulated by T. S. Eliot in "East Coker":

and every attempt  
Is a wholly new start, and a different kind of failure  
Because one has only learnt to get the better of words  
For the thing one no longer has to say, or the way in which  
One is no longer disposed to say it.

Waugh himself has written along much the same line in The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold, a novel which might well be a trap for the critic who wants to find the man behind the work. We can, however, test the following quotation by Waugh's novelistic practice and find enough support to give it some credence at least:

He had no wish to obliterate anything he had written, but he would dearly have liked to revise it, envying painters, who are allowed

to return to the same theme time and time again, clarifying and enriching until they have done all they can with it. A novelist is condemned to produce a succession of novelties, new names for characters, new incidents for his plots, new scenery; but, Mr. Pinfold maintained, most men harbour the germs of one or two books only; all else is professional trickery of which the most daemonic of the masters--Dickens and Balzac even--were flagrantly guilty.<sup>52</sup>

We have already seen that Waugh does treat the same themes, marriage and the radical instability of modern society, over and over again; we have seen the same characters reappear in book after book; and we will see that this is also true for situations and incidents. In addition to revising Brideshead, Waugh had previously supplied an alternate ending to A Handful of Dust. Granted external pressure (an American magazine's wish to serialize the novel) had something to do with this revision, still, a novelist who did not find revision congenial might have balked. Waugh also supplied us with alternate endings to the Crouchback trilogy, but these will be discussed in a later chapter. If Pinfold envied painters, Waugh should not have envied them; he availed himself of their prerogatives.

To return to our original question, should the structure have two or three major parts? A three-part structure creates a false impression in the important matter of major points of focus. If Ryder's memory is the principle of organization, each major division ought to embody a major point of focus. There are, however, only two such points: the friendship of Charles and Sebastian; and the love, whose natural fulfillment would be marriage proper, between Charles and Julia. There is no major point of focus in the "Brideshead Deserted" section of the revision, quantitatively a third of the novel. This would seem to constitute a serious flaw in structure, indeed. The third and final relationship, the mystical marriage of Christ and the Christian, is in neither version a point of focus, but rather that which emerges from the whole



process.

More immediately and concretely the three-book division is artificial and false because it makes out the "Brideshead Deserted" section to be something quite separate from the section dealing with Arcadian friendship. "Et in Arcadia Ego," the legend which serves as a title for Book I, is written on a human skull which Charles had purchased from Oxford's School of Medicine. Of all his newly acquired extravagances which serve as the subject of cousin Jasper's "Grand Remonstrance," the skull is the only item for which Charles had paid: "'Yes,' I said, glad to be clear of one charge. 'I had to pay cash for the skull'"<sup>53</sup> The grammatically correct translation of the Latin phrase, according to Erwin Panofsky, is: "'Even in Arcadia there am I,' from which we must conclude that the speaker is not a deceased Arcadian shepherd or shepherdess but Death in person."<sup>54</sup> Panofsky has a number of comments which bear on the appropriateness of the original structure.

To arrive at an understanding of the elegiac tradition, Panofsky traces the Et in Arcadia Ego theme, as it appears in painting and literature, from its origins in the Idylls of Theocritus and Virgil's Eclogues to the understanding of it in the twentieth century. The major steps along the way upon which he dwells are the reemergence of Virgil's concept of Arcadia during the Renaissance, the first explicit statement of the phrase in an early seventeenth century painting by Giovanni Guercino, and two slightly later paintings by Nicholas Poussin. In following the progress of the theme, Panofsky shows that there have been changes in the concept of Arcadian existence and in the reaction of the viewers to the skull (or tomb) upon which the phrase is written.

Arcadia in Brideshead, as it is conjured up for us by Ryder's memory,

is especially close in tone to the Renaissance Virgilian concept of "a Utopia of bliss and beauty distant in time." Panofsky's phrase, describing Virgil's style, "that vespertinal mixture of sadness and tranquility," can be applied as well to Ryder's tone as he describes the Oxford years. It also describes exactly the effect Julia has on Ryder at the opening of Book II. The tone, therefore, can be seen to function as a connecting link between the two major focal points. Panofsky also notes in the original source, Theocritus, that "the two fundamental tragedies of human existence, frustrated love and death, are by no means absent."<sup>55</sup> These elements appear in Brideshead, however; the death of Lady Marchmain and the full realization of the frustration of the love between Charles and Sebastian do not occur until Chapter Eight of Book I.

As for the attitudes of the viewers of the skull (or tomb), the Guercino picture presents a medieval memento mori proper to both moral theology and the grammar of the inscription. Panofsky notes the following change in attitude in the second of Poussin's paintings:

The Arcadians are not so much warned of an implacable future as they are immersed in a mellow meditation on a beautiful past. They seem to think less of themselves than of the human being buried in the tomb--a human being that once enjoyed the pleasures which they now enjoy, and whose monument "bids them remember their end" only so far as it evokes the memory of one who had been what they are.<sup>56</sup>

While there is something of "a mellow meditation on a beautiful past" in Charles's memories of his friendship with Sebastian, the material in the above quotation following the dash is not apparent in Brideshead--certainly Charles is not at present enjoying any pleasures. The final impression of Et in Arcadia Ego in Brideshead is closer to the Guercino memento mori. The death of Lady Marchmain and the death of friendship, occurring in the final chapter of the original structure, proclaim that structure a unit within the structure of the

whole. Thus the "Quomodo sedet sola civitas,"<sup>57</sup> which comes at the end of Chapter Eight, does not result from a different focusing of the memory; it is the inevitable final stage of the memory's Arcadian movement.

The cycle of the seasons as they mirror the events also testifies to the unity of Book I in its original form. Though Book I commences in summer on "a day of particular splendour, such as our climate affords once or twice a year, when leaf and flower and bird and sunlit stone and shadow seem all to proclaim the glory of God," the morning of Ryder's first visit to Brideshead, it soon goes back to his first unpropitious meeting with Sebastian the preceding March. A friendship approached at the tail end of winter, budding with spring, reaching its full summer ripeness in the days the two young men spend "alone" together at Brideshead--"always summer, always alone, the fruit always ripe and Aloysius in a good temper. . . .";<sup>58</sup> over-ripening in the late summer in Venice; threatened by the autumnal sadness of the second fall at Oxford: this is the tale of the first five chapters. It is certainly not a complete tale. Chapter Six opens in the dead of winter with Oxford a thing of the past. Though this accomplishes, in one sense, the full cycle of the seasons, it is frequently true that we do not really know something is over until something else has begun. It is not until Chapter Eight, when spring has returned and Charles has seen Sebastian in Fex with Kurt, that Charles has the full realization of the death that had always dwelt in Arcadia.

A serious, but untenable, objection to the original structure, voiced by James Carens, is that a disproportionately lengthy treatment is given to the material in Book I: "Waugh then scanted what ought really to be the center of the novel, the religious conflict engendered by the love of Julia and Ryder."<sup>59</sup> Even if we ignore the presumption of dictating an author's subject to him, this

would be a valid objection only if the concept of the novel's structure were a mechanical one. The events which take place in each of the two books occupy approximately the same span of time, three years. A thoroughly mechanical structure would demand equal spacial treatment for the two books. It is another sort of mechanistic concept which demands that because the events in Book II are really the more important they should be given a quantitatively longer treatment.

We must remember that the ordering of the whole is in terms of the synthesizing memory of Charles Ryder. Time, and the quantitative handling of the events in that time, must be true not to the clock, but to the memory. How the memory is likely to dwell on the different subjects to which it harkens back, is the proper measure of quantitative handling. After all, if an author is allowed to distort the sequence of events in rendering them, why should he not distort length in representation to suit his purposes?

"The languor of Youth--how unique and quintessential it is!" These opening words of Chapter Four, the chapter of friendship's ripeness, express an idea "Quintessential" to the problem of proportion. If it is languor which characterizes the golden days of youth, the Oxford years, the memory will move languorously as it records these experiences. The skull's warning, that one's stay in Arcadia is brief, is recorded slightly, in a far corner on the intellect, if it is recorded at all. The felt experience is a sense of "the mind sequestered and self-regarding, the sun standing still in the heavens and the earth throbbing to our own pulse."<sup>60</sup>

A number of scenes of complete presence, the delighting to dwell with that is friendship's fulfillment, stand out:

The bottle of Chateau Peyraguey and basket of strawberries consumed on a sheep-cropped knoll under a clump of elms . . . where the sweet summer scents around us and the fumes of the sweet, golden wine seemed to lift us a finger's breadth above the turf and hold us suspended.

.....  
We stopped at an inn, which was half farm also, and ate eggs and bacon, pickled walnuts and cheese, and drank our beer in a sunless parlour where an old clock ticked in the shadows and a cat slept by the empty grate.

.....  
Sebastian saying "We'll get to Godstow in time for dinner, drink at the Trout, leave Hardcastle's motor car and walk back by the river. Wouldn't that be best?"

.....  
Sebastian hobbling, with a pantomime of difficulty, to the old nurseries, sitting beside me on the thread-bare, flowered carpet with the boy cupboard empty about us and Nanny Hawkins stitching complacently in the corner, saying, "You're one as bad as the other; a pair of children the two of you. Is that what they teach you at college?" Sebastian prone on the sunny seat in the colonnade, as he was now, and I in a hard chair beside him, trying to draw the fountain.

.....  
And we would leave the golden candlelight of the dining-room for the starlight outside and sit on the edge of the fountain, cooling our hands in the water and listening drunkenly to its splash and gurgle over the rocks.<sup>61</sup>

The mood of friendship's full enjoyment here is constant. The scenes are all from the same summer, but since they occur in both Chapter One and Chapter Four the effect is of a much longer period of time--"the sun standing still in the heavens."<sup>62</sup> If we try to recall everything that has been narrated between the first and the last of these scenes, we can scarcely believe they span only three months.

These five scenes lifted out of their context may not appear important, but they form (perhaps Charles's first luncheon with Sebastian followed by a visit to the Botanical Gardens, and the journey from Dunkirk to Venice might also be included) the major point of focus for Book I. In these moments of friendship's completeness very little is said; there are certainly no discourses on the Meaning of Art, Literature, or Life. The sensuous element--a

delight in the taste and odor of food and wine and the feel of sunshine, shade, and relaxation--is predominant. This is delightful, and as it should be; after all, these are two young men, with youth's delight in the experience of the senses. The essential characteristic of these scenes, however, is their expression of the satisfaction of presence or dwelling as opposed to discussing or moving. But discussion and anxious activity, the inimical, divisive forces, also have their moments in the narrative. They form the background, the minor points of focus, serving to highlight the major focal point.

Since, quantitatively, the golden moments in Book I are really few, it might appear that Carens' objection is valid after all. But actually the arrangement of these moments in both Chapter One and Chapter Four gives the feeling of much greater quantity because the quality is so intense. The memory which moves over them is faithful to the felt qualitative experience. These golden moments, like the moments Eliot speaks of in "Burnt Norton":

the moment in the rose-garden.  
The moment in the arbour where the rain beat,  
The moment in the draughtly church at smoke-fall

seem moments, in one sense, out of time, quasi-eternal-epiphanies. The forces which will inevitably end these timeless moments must appear in the memory to have been gathering for a long time.

Perhaps the key to understanding this matter lies in the way in which time is commonly recorded in the memory. Does not time seem to race at times, to drag at other times? Have not poets over the ages noted "spots of time," golden moments, that stand apart from all other time--that stand still? And is it not quite possible, even if the events of later years are actually more important, that one's college days should seem golden, if one's mind, like Charles Ryder's at that time, was "sequestered and self-regarding"?<sup>63</sup>

The focal experience of Book II, the love of Charles and Julia, since it is a more mature experience, can be presumed to be of greater ultimate importance than the love of friendship. In the opening passages of Book II Ryder tells us that during the ten years which have elapsed he has not really been alive as a whole man, as he had been during his friendship with Sebastian. With Celia his existence has been fragmentary. His coming together with Julia unifies his life, gives it a more intense wholeness of meaning than it had ever had, even with Sebastian. But from the very moment of their love's awakening, there is a pressing sense of its transience. A storm at sea brings them together; such storms are brief; ships soon reach port; what then? Even back at Brideshead where they have tried to insulate themselves from hostile forces, pressures are felt:

"But we have our happiness in spite of them; here and now, we've taken possession of it. They can't hurt us, can they?"

"Not tonight; not now."

"Not for how many nights?"<sup>64</sup>

Soon, in terms of the memory (two years), there is another storm gathering, one which may separate them, the threat of war. Above all there is their experience of life which has in the past shown them the foolishness of their dreams, the brevity of the sunlit day.

Charles realizes even at the time of these events themselves that these experiences are not completely new. He sees his relationship with Julia, the second major focal point, as being associated with his love for Sebastian. The question might be asked, do Sebastian and Julia have some quality in common which overpowers Charles Ryder? The two obvious answers are beauty and charm of a special kind. Charles tells us of his first meeting with Julia during the Arcadian summer: "She so much resembled Sebastian that, sitting beside her in

the gathering dusk, I was confused by the double illusion of familiarity and strangeness."<sup>65</sup>

This is not the first time Waugh has presented us with a brother and sister of great charm and strong resemblance to each other. In Put Out More Flags Freddy Sothill is at times disturbed by the likeness between his wife Barbara and her brother, Basil Seal: "For there was a disconcerting resemblance between Basil and Barbara; she too was farouche in a softer and deadlier manner, and the charm which held him breathless flashed in gross and acquisitive shape in Basil."<sup>66</sup> In Put Out More Flags little is done with the brother-sister relationship. It affords Basil a place of refuge during the first winter of the war, a base of operations from which he can exploit the immediate neighborhood, but little else. The relationship, however, must have intrigued Waugh. He reworks it in two different ways, one in Brideshead and another in Sword of Honour.

Unusual beauty and a unique charm are not the only attractions for Charles. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that beauty and charm are the initial attractions through and behind which a more basic pull can be exerted. During the first day of the storm at sea, before they formally become lovers, Charles talks with Julia:

"I was glad when I found Celia was unfaithful," I said.

"I felt it was all right for me to dislike her."

"Is she? Do you? I'm glad. I don't like her either."

Why did you marry her?"

"Physical attraction. Ambition. Everyone agrees she's the ideal wife for a painter. Loneliness, missing Sebastian."

"You loved him, didn't you?"

"Oh yes. He was the forerunner."

Julia understood.

Some two years later this note recurs in another conversation:



"It's frightening," Julia once said, "to think how completely you have forgotten Sebastian."

"He was the forerunner."

"That's what you said in the storm. I've thought since: perhaps I am only a forerunner, too."<sup>67</sup>

The last sentence quoted introduces overtly (a close reading will reveal previous veiled hints) what is to emerge from the whole process as the final synthesis of Ryder's memory. The passage continues:

Perhaps, I thought, while her words still hung in the air between us like a wisp of tobacco smoke--a thought to fade and vanish like smoke without a trace--perhaps all our loves are merely hints and symbols; a hill of many invisible crests; doors that open as in a dream to reveal only a further stretch of carpet and another door; perhaps you and I are types and this sadness which sometimes falls between us springs from disappointment in our search, each straining through and beyond the other, snatching a glimpse now and then of the shadow which turns the corner always a pace or two ahead of us.<sup>68</sup>

The passage is charged with images reminiscent of those Eliot uses in "Burnt Norton":

Footfalls echo in the memory  
Down the passage which we did not take  
Towards the door we never opened  
Into the rose garden.

.....

Shall we follow?

Quick, said the bird, find them, find them,  
Round the corner.

Though in Brideshead the doors are opened, the basic meaning of the images in both works is the same. It is the door image in the Brideshead passage, one of many image clusters, that is important here.

A traditional metaphor for life is a ship on a storm-tossed sea; in a number of ways the voyage in Chapter One of Book II serves as a microcosm for the novel. The storm tears free from their hooks the ominous bronze doors of the lounge. Ignoring for the moment the overtones regarding subject and theme present, the image is a metaphor for the main lines of the novel's structure:

"Regularly and, it seemed, irresistibly, first one, then the other, opened and shut; they paused at the completion of each half circle, began to move slowly and finished fast with a resounding clash."<sup>69</sup> Charles's love, first for Sebastian and then for Julia, opened and shut; there is a pause of ten years and of four years at the end of each half of the memory's swing, and in each book and in the novel as a whole the memory begins slowly and finishes "fast with a resounding clash."

Thus Brideshead consists of a two-part structure, corresponding to Sebastian and Julia as the two major points of focus for the memory of Captain Charles Ryder, which harmonizes with the whole conception of the novel and its organizational principle.

## 4

The above section is merely the general outline of the structure, for, as Menen suggests, in a baroque style the advance is by stages which "unfold and dissolve one into the other something after the fashion of music."<sup>70</sup> If we think of baroque fullness and complexity in terms of Bach (any number of other artists in other media might serve as well), counterpoint, an element not mentioned by Mr. Menen, suggests itself. As we examine Brideshead's individual chapters and the minor focal points within a given chapter in their relations to each other, we see that counterpoint figures prominently. We shall find that, like the baroque fountain at Brideshead, the novel has its "shadows . . . lingering echoes . . . clustered feats of daring and invention."<sup>71</sup> The eye of the mind, as it is drawn along with Ryder's memory, is enriched by speculating on many prospects as it turns and doubles back and curves off and up toward the final synthesis.

We shall later consider the structural importance of the prologue in terms of its imagery. For a brief treatment of how the individual chapters are related to each other, we need only add here that while Ryder, as he is in the present, feels old and jaundiced, he can relive and rekindle both for himself and for us the magic of his past.

The switch in mood from the detached scepticism of the prologue is startling as Chapter One opens on the joyous summer of friendship at Oxford. The focus in Chapter One is Sebastian. Presented first with the full bloom of friendship, we are then shown its seed and early sprouting before being brought back to summer's full growth.

Chapter Two is counterpoint; it introduces forces of opposition. There are two minor figures of focus: Ryder's cousin Jasper and Anthony Blanche, the "aesthete," who in turn focus back on Sebastian. Jasper is the pompous, rather ridiculous, and easily dismissed voice of conventional responsibility, warning Charles that his friendship with Sebastian is endangering his chances of success at the University and of a "career elsewhere." Anthony Blanche's temptation is more subtle and more disturbing. He too says that Charles, in his relationship with Sebastian, is throwing away his chances of success, and since artistic success is something Charles desires, Anthony's appeal exerts a considerable attraction. Anthony tells Charles that he recognizes him as an Artist, that Sebastian is all charming, and that "it is not an experience I would recommend for An Artist at the tenderest stage of his growth, to be strangled with charm."<sup>72</sup> Sebastian appears briefly at the very end of the chapter and in mentioning his Teddy bear unwittingly places a further strain on Charles's friendship by confirming one of Anthony's predictions.

Chapter Three presents a second counterpointed motif, one which leads

back to the major point of focus. Charles, at home with his father, in grotesquely comic scenes praised by critics who dislike the book as a whole,<sup>73</sup> shows us why he needs Sebastian's love. The implied failure of the Senior Ryder's marriage and his explicit failure to give his son any love echo with variations what Charles had heard of Sebastian's family life. The two young men in a sense are orphans; at least they feel like orphans. The lack of normal Christian family life is partially responsible for the completeness of their commitment to each other. In Waugh's view this is a particularly serious result of the breakdown of Christian marriage--a subject about which still more will be said in a later chapter. No doubt is left as to the propriety of Charles's immediate response to Sebastian's call at the end of the chapter.

The first half of Chapter Four pictures Charles's conversion to the baroque and the full ripeness of friendship. The focus is again Sebastian. In the second half of the chapter the focus shifts to Lord Marchmain before Cara, Lord Marchmain's mistress, brings it back to Sebastian in her discourse on his impending troubles.

The autumnal opening sentence of Chapter Five sets the tone of the chapter's first half. The world of friendship like the world of nature is in decay. At almost midpoint in the chapter there is a break; then, following a brief reference to winter, a second, totally different spring begins. The chapter marks the intrusion of outside forces, notably Rex Mottram, Mr. Samgrass, and, above all, Lady Marchmain. Up to this point Charles and Sebastian had been in control; now others force their way into their lives. After the break at mid-chapter the focus shifts from Sebastian to Lady Marchmain.

The full expression of friendship's winter is reserved for Chapter Six.

There is no outstanding focal point; memory jumps from point to point and ends by regarding itself. The agony of the post-Christmas party at Brideshead, revealing Mr. Samgrass's duplicity, is finally broken when Sebastian tells Charles that Charles can be of no help to him. There is a Prufrock-like ring to Charles's imagery as he surveys his prospects, after leaving Brideshead in disgrace: "I had come to the surface, into the light of common day and the fresh sea-air, after long captivity in the sunless coral palaces and waving forests of the ocean bed."<sup>74</sup> But it is a winter daylight, a daylight without warmth, into which he comes. The dinner with Rex that concludes the chapter is an index to his falling off: food and wine, once the fitting concomitants of friendship, must now be enjoyed selfishly, for their own sakes.

Chapter Seven is Julia's chapter. The connection with the preceding chapter which ended with Rex talking of his affairs is not difficult to see. Waugh gives us the fuller relationship of the new stage, as it "unfolds" from what has gone before and "dissolves" into what will be, in the opening paragraphs: "And, as Sebastian in his sharp decline seemed daily to fade and crumble, so much the more did Julia stand out clear and firm." The chapter's final sentence places it in time and further foreshadows the coming events: "It was ten years later that she said this to me in a storm in the Atlantic."<sup>75</sup> Of course, this is a common, rather than a particularly baroque, novelistic device, but it is in harmony with the novel's baroque features.

The opening of Chapter Eight further specifies the time and indicates the external rather than the personal focus: "I returned to London in the spring of 1926 for the General Strike." The next sentence carries us back to the closing scene of Chapter Six: "It was the topic of Paris." These sentences and the half dozen or so pages following them might approximate the

"flat" passages Menen refers to. They do not relate in a direct way to Charles's love for either Sebastian or Julia. They do, however, give us the flavor of the time, the flavor of Bricktop's and the Bal Negre in Paris and the vogue for the "Black Birds" in London--what to American readers would be the Hemingway-Fitzgerald era--set against the turmoil of the proposed General Strike. The strike is handled in the unique Waugh manner. In so much of the fiction of the thirties and after, we have seen a strike treated with heavy-handed seriousness, as though it were a climacteric in the history of Western civilization. Waugh returns to something like his manner in Decline and Fall, a mildly amused detachment. Nor can Waugh be found guilty of gross class prejudice in his treatment. The most absurd figure of all is Jean de Brissac la Motte, who "claimed the right to bear arms in any battle anywhere against the lower classes." This posseur's fate is true to the vein of the mock-heroic, which so frequently is part of the Waugh humor: "Jean, who joined another company, had a pot of ferns dropped on his head by an elderly widow in Camden Town and was in hospital for a week."<sup>76</sup>

The second section of the chapter records the complete and, what might appear at the time to be the final, dispersal from Brideshead. Seeing Sebastian with Kurt in Morocco, brings home to Charles in a finally convincing way that their own special relationship is over. The Sebastian-Kurt relationship is a reworking of the situation in Put Out More Flags described in Ambrose Silk's "Monument to a Spartan."<sup>77</sup> In Brideshead the situation is expanded, the homosexuality (in the original edition, at least) is deleted, and the German's eventual suicide replaces destruction at the hands of the Storm Troopers. The focus in this chapter is brought back to Sebastian, first through Anthony Blanche and then through the off-stage death of Lady Marchmain. Her death, the

death promised by the skull and the legend inscribed on it, brings to a close the first sweep of the memory, the days in Arcadia. Cordelia, the youngest member of the Marchmain family, predicts that everything is not finished, but Ryder's memory records that at the time his consciousness had no room for her speculations: "But I had no patience with this convent chatter."<sup>78</sup> Preoccupied with his quickening artistic abilities, he is at the nadir of his powers to enter into personal relationship.

The opening passages of Book II rhapsodize the importance of memory and have the effect of lyric poetry. They reorient us to the organizing principle of the novel. When drawing conclusions about judgments and themes from these passages we must be very careful about tense; a number of different times are alluded to. The second section of the chapter, the scenes with Ryder's wife Celia, the sister of the obnoxious Boy Mulcaster, a girl referred to only once in Book I as a girl whose looks appealed to Mr. Samgrass, could have been taken right out of Vile Bodies. This is appropriate, for Celia's world is the waste land world of the Bright Young People. A point of focus is firmly established when Charles meets Julia on the ocean liner. Julia dominates the remainder of the chapter, for even when she is not physically present, she is present in Charles's thoughts. Her presence makes him feel whole again.

Chapter Two is essentially a repetition, with one significant variation, of Chapter Two in Book I. A member of Charles's family delivers a remonstrance on duty; this time it is his wife:

Not to-night, Charles; you can't go there to-night. You're expected at home. You promised, as soon as the exhibition was ready, you'd come home. Johnjohn and Nanny have made a banner with 'Welcome' on it. And you haven't seen Caroline yet.

Then Anthony Blanche turns up again to proclaim, as he did at Oxford, the

danger of charm for the Artist. The significant variation is that Anthony's first discourse had deeply disturbed Charles. Now, while Charles accepts Anthony's judgment of his paintings, he has tried art as he experienced love and has a mature grasp of his own sense of values. His only concern at this time is for Julia. Her response does not leave Charles in doubt as Sebastian's had: "Julia pulled off her hat and tossed it into the rack above her, and shook her night-dark hair with a little sigh of ease--a sigh fit for the pillow, the sinking firelight and a bedroom window open to the stars and the whisper of bare trees."<sup>79</sup> There is an addendum of Rex at forty, a counterpart of Celia as another dweller in the waste land. The stychomythia that comprises most of this final section has the brittle waste land quality of the dialogue in Vile Bodies and A Handful of Dust. The chapter closes with an expression of Charles's and Julia's happiness and a doubt as to the permanence of any human experience.

The search for permanence is picked up by Julia in Chapter Three; again the focus is on her. She wants to make an effort at a permanent peace by marrying Charles and having a child. To his question, why now?, she responds: "Sometimes . . . I feel the past and the future pressing so hard that there's no room for the present at all." Another kind of permanence is pressed upon her by her brother Bridey's bombshell that she is living in sin. Counterpoint to Julia's struggle to reconcile the claims of temporal and eternal peace is supplied by another passage of the empty voices of Rex's friends. To escape from these voices at the chapter's end, Charles and Julia go out into the moonlight, where "in the silent park might have stood the Grecian tents where Cressid lay that night."<sup>80</sup> There is a variation of Chapter Three of Book I in which Charles had realized how completely his father had cut him out. Here,



Julia feels she has completely cut off God, her Eternal Father.

At this point the paralleling of the chapters of the two books ceases. There is no need for a chapter expressing fullness of love; we have already seen it in the storm scenes, the conclusion of Chapter Two, and the opening and concluding passages of Chapter Three. There can be no declining, autumnal chapter; any decline from this noon would be night. We have had the pause and the slow sweep gathering momentum; we must expect the swift final swing to a "resounding clash."

Chapter Four registers a change somewhat similar to that in Chapter Six of Book I. Divorce and its corresponding disorder occupy the opening sections with an appropriate loss of point of focus. The "forerunner" theme is enunciated as the pressure of total experience bears increasingly on the consciousness of both Charles and Julia, following Cordelia's return from Spain with the news of Sebastian's having gone back to his faith. Charles recognizes that what had appeared to be the mere wisp of a difficulty in their lives is a gathering avalanche.

In the final chapter, Chapter Five, everyone's plans suffer a reversal when Lord Marchmain comes home to die. He is the overt focal point of the chapter. But what Charles's consciousness is really registering, what his memory is synthesizing, is the effect events are having on Julia. Charles is deliberate in his attempts not to look at Julia. He does so only when he feels he has a point to his advantage in his last ditch attempt to hold back the avalanche. When the avalanche finally comes, after (but not because of) Lord Marchmain's deathbed repentance, Charles tells Julia he knew: "Since this morning; since before this morning; all this year,"<sup>81</sup> that she could not con-

tinue to keep herself cut off from God.

In the epilogue we discover that some time (he uses the word "recently") during the intervening four years Ryder has become a Catholic. Should anyone be surprised? There were clues all along as to what the final synthesis, the relationship that could not be a "forerunner" to any other, would be. In fact, the very first sentence of Book I is a sentence impossible to an agnostic: "Leaf and flower and bird and sun-lit stone and shadow seem all to proclaim the glory of God."

We have now seen that the experiences narrated form a whole--Charles does achieve an abiding relationship--and the major parts of that whole are arranged in harmonious proportion to the truth of the ordering principle, the memory. The two major parts are controlled by the focal points of the two summers at Brideshead: one in the sunshine of Youth with Sebastian, the other in the "tranquil lime-scented evening"<sup>82</sup> with Julia. All the minor stages of development are essentially related to these two major points of focus in such a way that the final relationship emerges from the whole process.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Wayne C. Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961).

<sup>2</sup>Evelyn Waugh, Brideshead Revisited (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1946). All references to Brideshead Revisited, unless otherwise specified, will be to this edition, which hereafter will be referred to as BR.

<sup>3</sup>The symbolic significance of the title and a number of its implications have been pointed out by Rodney Delsanto and Mario L. D'Avanzo, "Truth and Beauty in Brideshead Revisited," Modern Fiction Studies, XI (Summer, 1965), 143-144.

<sup>4</sup>The original English edition (London: Chapman and Hall Ltd., 1945); the first American edition (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1946); and the revised edition (London: Chapman and Hall Ltd., 1960) carry the subtitle. The Dell paperback edition does not carry the subtitle.

<sup>5</sup>Brideshead Revisited (London: Chapman and Hall Ltd., 1960), p. 9. Hereafter this text will be referred to as BR (revised edition).

<sup>6</sup>Ronald S. Crane, "The Concept of Plot and the Plot of Tom Jones," in Critics and Criticism, ed. by Ronald S. Crane (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952), p. 624: "A distinctive whole there is, however, and I venture to say it consists, not in any mere combination of these parts, but rather in the dynamic system of actions, extending throughout the novel, by which the divergent intentions and beliefs of a large number of persons of different characters and states of knowledge belonging to or somehow related to the neighboring families of the Allworthys and the Westerns are made to cooperate, with the assistance of Fortune, first to bring Tom into an incomplete and precarious union, founded on an affinity of nature in spite of a disparity of status, with Allworthy and Sophia; then to separate him as completely as possible from them through actions that impel both of them, one after the other, to reverse their opinions of his character; and then, just as he seems about to fulfill the old prophecy that 'he was certainly born to be hanged,' to restore them unexpectedly to him in a more entire and stable union of both affection and fortune than he has known before."

<sup>7</sup>Wilson, Classics and Commercials, p. 140. The date, March 4, 1944, refers to the article's original appearance in the New Yorker.

<sup>8</sup>Dennis, "The Pillar of Anchorage House," and Macaulay "Evelyn Waugh," are two examples of criticism praising Waugh's talents as a humorist, while repudiating his sense of values.

<sup>9</sup>Above, p. ii.

<sup>10</sup>Dennis, "The Pillar of Anchorage House," 350-51.

<sup>11</sup>Above, p. iv.

<sup>12</sup>Carens, The Satire Art of Evelyn Waugh, pp. 7-8, claims that while these passages of stychomythia may be influenced by T. S. Eliot's "Sweeney Agonistes," Waugh's primary indebtedness is to Ronald Firbank.

<sup>13</sup>Dennis, "The Pillar of Anchorage House," 350.

<sup>14</sup>Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction, p. 158.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., pp. 198-99.

<sup>16</sup>Evelyn Waugh, Decline and Fall (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1945), p. 163. Hereafter this text will be referred to as DF.

<sup>17</sup>Evelyn Waugh, Vile Bodies (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1945), pp. 170-71. Hereafter this text will be referred to as VB.

<sup>18</sup>Eric Linklater, The Art of Adventure (London: Macmillan, 1948), p. 47, maintains that in Black Mischief Waugh showed himself to be far tougher than Ernest Hemingway.

<sup>19</sup>Evelyn Waugh, A Handful of Dust (New York: Farrar & Rinehart Incorporated, 1934), p. 279. Hereafter this text will be referred to as HD.

<sup>20</sup>Richard Wasson, "A Handful of Dust: Critique of Victorianism," Modern Fiction Studies, VII (Winter, 1961-62), 327-37, gives a perceptive analysis of the novel's religious implications.

<sup>21</sup>Evelyn Waugh, Scoop (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1938), pp. 320-21.

<sup>22</sup>Evelyn Waugh, Tactical Exercise (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1954), Hereafter this text will be referred to as TE.

<sup>23</sup>TE, p. 182.

<sup>24</sup>Evelyn Waugh, Put Out More Flags (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1948), pp. 275, 286. Hereafter this text will be referred to as POMF.

<sup>25</sup>Dennis, "The Pillar of Anchorage House," 357-360.

<sup>26</sup>Christopher Hollis, Evelyn Waugh, Bibliographical Series of Supplements to British Book News on Writers and Their Work, No. 46 (London: Longmans Green & Co., 1954), p. 37.

<sup>27</sup>DF, pp. 291-92.

<sup>28</sup>VB, p. 110.

<sup>29</sup>HD, pp. 208, 181, 162.

<sup>30</sup>Scoop, p. 231.

<sup>31</sup>Wilson, Classics and Commercials, pp. 145-46.

<sup>32</sup>POMF, p. 209.

<sup>33</sup>Macaulay, "Evelyn Waugh," 376; and D. S. Savage, "The Innocence of Evelyn Waugh," The Western Review, XIV (Spring, 1950), 197.

<sup>34</sup>POMF, p. 220.

<sup>35</sup>POMF, pp. 209, 268.

<sup>36</sup>POMF, p. 221.

<sup>37</sup>Marcus, "Evelyn Waugh and the Art of Entertainment," 348-49.

<sup>38</sup>Aubrey Menen, "The Baroque and Mr. Waugh," Month, ns., V (April, 1951) 348-49. Menen quotes from Luigi Moretti, "Forme Astratte Nella Scultura Barroca," Spazio, No. 3 (Rome, 1950).

<sup>39</sup>Linklater, The Art of Adventure, says that Brideshead is "une recherche du temps perdue, and despite the passages of brilliant comedy with which it is interfused, an extraordinary sadness lies over it, as of time lost; time like a fortune, lost" (p. 50).

<sup>40</sup>Evelyn Waugh, "A Remarkable Historical Novel," review of A Legacy, by Sybille Bedford, in the Spectator, CXCVI (April 13, 1956), 498, complains of a time sequence "unnecessarily disturbed."

<sup>41</sup>Like all terms of any degree of largeness in literary or art criticism, "baroque" has been used to suggest many different characteristics. Lowry Nelson, Jr., a writer with a keen awareness of the difficulty of ascribing accurate characteristics to a general term, finds that "the use of time as a means of structure as part of a broader tendency to view time under the aspect of eternity as contingent and manipulatable" and "the representation of a complex attitude" are what most especially characterize the baroque lyric throughout Europe (Baroque Lyric Poetry [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961], pp. 161, 90). Germain Bazin says of the baroque artists that he "longs to enter into the multiplicity of phenomena, into the flux of things in their perpetual becoming--his compositions are dynamic and open and tend to expand outside their boundaries; the forms that go to make them are associated in a single organic action and cannot be isolated from one another. The Baroque artist's instinct for escape drives him to prefer 'forms that take flight' to those that are static and dense" (Baroque and Rococo Art, translated by

Jonathan Griffin [New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1964], pp. 6-7). Bazin's description is applicable to many features of Brideshead, but especially to Ryder's description of his memory: "That winged host that soared about me one grey morning of war-time" (BR, p. 225).

<sup>42</sup>Bergonzi, "Evelyn Waugh's Gentlemen," 25, calls Ryder "weak; sentimental, snobbish." Stephen Spender, The Creative Element (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1953), pp. 172-73, accuses Ryder of brutality in his relations with both Sebastian and Celia.

<sup>43</sup>BR, p. 82.

<sup>44</sup>In addition to Wilson and Macaulay on this point see: Sean O'Faolain, The Vanishing Hero (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1956), p. 60.

<sup>45</sup>BR, p. 291.

<sup>46</sup>E. M. Forster, Aspects of the Novel, Harvest Books (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1954), pp. 67-68.

<sup>47</sup>BR, p. 72.

<sup>48</sup>Evelyn Waugh, "Our Heart's Own Reasons," review of The End of the Affair, by Graham Greene, in Commonweal, LIV (August 17, 1951), 458.

<sup>49</sup>Waugh calls attention to the fact that it is Ryder's, not Waugh's, memory which is doing the synthesizing in a prefatory author's note: "I am not I; thou art not he or she; they are not they."

<sup>50</sup>BR (Revised edition), p. 9.

<sup>51</sup>BR, p. 225.

<sup>52</sup>Evelyn Waugh, The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1957), pp. 4-5. Hereafter this text will be referred to as OGP.

<sup>53</sup>BR, p. 42.

<sup>54</sup>Erwin Panofsky, Meaning in the Visual Arts, Doubleday Anchor Books (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1955), p. 307.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., pp. 303, 300.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., p. 313.

<sup>57</sup>BR, p. 220.

<sup>58</sup>BR, pp. 21, 79.

<sup>59</sup>Carens, The Satiric Art of Evelyn Waugh, p. 105.

<sup>60</sup>BR, p. 79.

<sup>61</sup>BR, pp. 24, 34, 40, 80, 84.

<sup>62</sup>BR, p. 79.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid.

<sup>64</sup>BR, p. 276.

<sup>65</sup>BR, pp. 75-76.

<sup>66</sup>POMF, p. 10.

<sup>67</sup>BR, pp. 257, 302-03.

<sup>68</sup>BR, p. 303.

<sup>69</sup>BR, p. 252.

<sup>70</sup>Above, p. 18.

<sup>71</sup>BR, p. 82.

<sup>72</sup>BR, p. 57.

<sup>73</sup>Wilson, Classics and Commercials, p. 302; and Churchill, "The House of Evelyn Waugh," p. 110.

<sup>74</sup>BR, p. 169.

<sup>75</sup>BR, pp. 179, 200.

<sup>76</sup>BR, pp. 200- 201, 207.

<sup>77</sup>POMF, pp. 239-41.

<sup>78</sup>BR, p. 222.

<sup>79</sup>BR, pp. 266, 274.

<sup>80</sup>BR, pp. 279-295.

<sup>81</sup>BR, p. 340.

<sup>82</sup>BR, p. 276.

## CHAPTER II

### BRIDESHEAD REVISITED: THE IMAGERY

The first chapter attempted to deal with the structure of Brideshead in terms of its wholeness and harmony or proportion, two qualities which, for Stephen Dedalus, in what he calls "applied Aquinas," make up two-thirds of the beautiful.<sup>1</sup> The third quality, which Stephen calls radiance, is extremely elusive. Perhaps the quality is finally somewhat ineffable, better explained by metaphor than analysis. For example, when Eliot talks about Donne having felt his thought "as immediately as the odour of a rose,"<sup>2</sup> he is not talking about something which can be demonstrated as objectively as whether or not a metaphor is extended or contracted, but rather about the effect which Donne's poetry has had on him. Since we almost inevitably reach into the metaphorical realm to express what we feel has been the effect of radiance in a work of art on us, it seems reasonable that we should examine the imagery of Brideshead for what light it can shed on the question of radiance, as well as the additional support it might give to the novel's wholeness and proportion.

Exactly how imagery is involved in our being moved by a piece of writing has probably never been reduced to a formula, but that it is significantly involved is universally acknowledged. We might seem to be in something of a dilemma, caught on the horns of opposing generalizations. There are, however, alternatives other than complete understanding and complete mystery. If completely objective analysis is impossible, we can at least ask in our study of a



novel's imagery if it is in agreement with the total conception of the work, and if it is sufficiently rich in texture so that new shades and depths of light continue to be seen on repeated readings.

We have already stated that the structure of Brideshead has a number of baroque characteristics. If the imagery is to be consistent with the structural aspect of the work's total conception, it must be copious, complex, and coherent--like the fountain at Brideshead, splendid "in all its clustered feats of daring and invention."<sup>3</sup> We might expect the following: an image pattern controlling the organizational principle; a pattern controlling the whole of the subject matter or thematic material; patterns controlling each of the two main focal points (particular examples of which may control individual chapters); and particular images (which may or may not be part of a larger pattern) which control individual chapters or scenes. All of these patterns and particular images ought to be related to each other in some reasonable way. This chapter will attempt to show that the imagery in Brideshead satisfies in an eminent way all of these demands. In the course of our treatment of the subject, we will also deal with two major charges that have been leveled against Brideshead's imagery: (1) that the military imagery is inappropriate;<sup>4</sup> (2) that all of the imagery is superimposed.<sup>5</sup>

Before examining the image patterns it might be well to recall that imagery is ordinarily talked about in two ways: in a larger sense, one closely related to scene, which gives us the picture of where and how the action takes place; and in a more restricted sense of the particular pictures evoked by the novelist's use of language, especially his comparative language.

A good novelist, like a good dramatist, usually is careful to establish the idea controlling his use of imagery, as well as the idea controlling plot

and theme, in his opening scenes. For example, the muck and fog of the London streets in the opening paragraphs of Dickens' Bleak House and the impenetrability of the Golfo Placido in the first chapter of Conrad's Nostromo provide the images which control the emotional responses to both novels. When we examine the prologue, especially the first several pages, of Brideshead, we discover that Waugh has given us the controlling structural and thematic images almost immediately.

The image in the opening sentence of Brideshead's prologue supplies the organizational principle for the form of the whole work: "When I reached C Company lines, which were at the top of the hill, I paused and looked back at the camp, just coming into full view below me through the grey mist of early morning." A looking back on experience just coming into clear focus through the mists (of time) is an accurate image for the synthesizing memory. That we achieve full understanding through the memory's restructuring, rather than in the experience itself, is not something peculiar to Brideshead; for example, it is true of Marlow in Heart of Darkness and in accord with many of the suggestions Eliot offers in Four Quartets. An approach through the memory is a way of recreating the experience, and the recreation becomes a way of understanding the original experience. The present is a hill from which the memory looks back into the mist-shrouded valley of the past, out of which emerges what has been most important in our lives. The image recurs in the climactic "forerunner" scene in Book II in a passage which brings together a cluster of the more important image patterns. In the "forerunner" scene we are aware of other crests on the hill stretching before us, but the position of the experience, the view, and the mists are the same.

In addition to evoking the operation of the memory, the prologue's open-

ing sentence informs us of the military condition, with its suggestion of being embattled, from which all is viewed. In his preface Waugh says of the 1960 revision: "It is offered to a younger generation of readers as a souvenir of the Second War rather than of the 'twenties or of the 'thirties, with which it ostensibly deals."<sup>6</sup> He could have spared himself the trouble, for as much is obvious to the reader of any generation who is attentive to the imagery in any edition. Indeed, the embattled condition of prologue and epilogue, which is recalled to our attention from time to time in both Books I and II, is in no small part responsible for the novel's effect of the poignancy of loss.

It would be "inappropriate," while crossing the Atlantic on a luxury liner in 1936, to explain the closed concentric circles of personal relationships in English society in terms of "having built its own defensive lines, camouflaged vulnerable points, and laid a field of mines across all but a few well-trodden paths, so that, more often than not, we can only signal to one another from either side of the tangle of wire."<sup>7</sup> However, the memory which is recording the experience is not a first class passenger's in 1936 but an infantry captain's in 1943. Moreover, there is a perfectly valid suggestion that the social behavior described led inevitably to the military situation from which it is being described.

The prologue's second paragraph supplies the connection between the structural and thematic patterns of imagery: "Here love had died between me and the army." While all of the major image patterns, like the lines and figures of baroque painting, sculpture, and music, function both thematically and structurally, for the purpose of analysis we can regard those patterns dealing with memory and its position as structural and those dealing with

marriage and all associated with it as thematic.

A few paragraphs later Ryder picks up the love-army relationship in the tremendously powerful extended comparison between his life in the army and a marriage on the rocks. The comparison's power derives from its compression, despite its fullness, and its being lethally true to life. In the little more than half page beginning: "I knew it all, the whole drab compass of marital disillusion; we had been through it together, the army and I, from the first importunate courtship until now, when nothing remained to us except the chill bonds of law and duty and custom,"<sup>8</sup> there is compressed the matter of an entire domestic tragedy, with the major stages clearly marked. The image haunts the reader's consciousness as Ryder recalls one unsatisfactory marriage after another.

Furthermore, the identification of arms and love is traditional, there being two aspects of the identification: valor is identified with love and beauty; war is identified with lust. In literature the two aspects are not always easy to distinguish unless the motives of the characters involved are clearly delineated, for although love and lust are antithetical, our vocabulary for each is largely the same. Are we always able to distinguish them clearly in Chaucer's version of the Troilus story? There is no difficulty, however, distinguishing them in Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida. Harold C. Goddard, in his treatment of the play, says:

What the author is saying is that the problem of lust and the problem of violence, and so of war, are the same problem seen from different angles. . . . The end of both military and sexual fury, this play says over and over, is self-annihilation.<sup>9</sup>

Certainly this is also true for Brideshead. The breakdown of marriage,

the Christian concept of human love, finds its final expression in war. But Goddard's word "fury" may mislead us. It calls to mind a "hot-eyed" demon of lust but what we have in the modern waste land, as Conrad pointed out, are weak, flabby, cold-eyed demons. Waugh himself, commenting on the faithful portrayal of lust in Malcolm Muggeridge's In a Valley of This Restless Mind, said:

They are very dry and gloomy episodes reminiscent of the 'When lovely woman stoops to folly' passage in The Waste Land. In brief, what Mr. Muggeridge has discovered and wishes to explain is the ancient piece of folk-wisdom that Lust and Love are antithetical and that Lust is boring.<sup>10</sup>

The distinctions in Waugh's novels are clear. When military imagery is used in the realm of love (as in the passage just quoted from Brideshead), the proper relationship has been perverted. Recalling the differences in his relationship with Julia from the courtship of his ten dead years, Charles says:

I would plan my evening and think, at such and such a time, at such and such an opportunity, I shall cross the start-line and open my attack for better or worse; this phase of the battle has gone on long enough, I would think; a decision must be reached. With Julia there were no phases, no start-line, no tactics at all.<sup>11</sup>

The absence of military imagery pertaining to Julia would seem to indicate that love, not lust, is the basis of their relationship.

Military imagery, instead of being inappropriate, is an integral part of the design of the novel. In addition to locating the memory precisely and giving it a unique coloration, there is a thematic fitness in war as the inevitable outcome of the behavior not only of Charles and the Marchmains but also of a whole era.

The controlling thematic image of the whole work is marriage. In the larger sense in which we speak of imagery, the scenes, first with Charles and Sebastian, then with Charles and Julia, together with the descriptions of the unhappy and broken marriages in which all of the major characters become in-

volved, give abundant and obvious evidence of the controlling interest.

Logically associated in an integral way with marriage, is the more particularized image of the house. One of the first, if not the first, question two people about to enter into marriage must face is where are they going to live. In Western civilization dwelling has meant a house; consequently, the house has become traditionally associated with the society as a microcosm of the larger organization. Necessarily a part of the attempt to establish or expand a dwelling is the struggle to maintain it against the elements which seek to encompass its ruin. Another concern inextricably bound up with marriage, at least as marriage has been traditionally regarded, is the progression of the generations which molds a civilization. Therefore, all the arts by which a civilization is built and passed on are directly connected with dwellings, and images from these arts are connected with the image of the house.

The image of the house is prominent throughout Waugh's fiction. It has been, perhaps, the most critically discussed aspect of his work.<sup>12</sup> Concern about a dwelling place is especially important for the class of English society about whom Waugh writes. They are, by and large, the landed gentry, or at least people with "houses."

In this respect Waugh's characters are squarely in the "great tradition" of the English novel. Even poor David Copperfield was born in a house, the Rookery; such a delightful young lady as Elizabeth Bennet thinks that it would be something to be mistress of Pemberley, and her sister Jane does not scorn Netherfield; to drown his happiness, Tom Jones returns to live with Sophia at his uncle's Paradise Hall; and even Moll Flanders and Pamela--those two women of such different appearance (but inner likeness?)--have a high regard for

real estate. It takes a mystic like Dorothea Brooks to reject a house—an action which proves shocking to her sister and brother-in-law.

The interest in houses persists among Waugh's contemporaries. The title of Aldous Huxley's first novel, Crome Yellow, refers to the country house in which the action of the novel takes place. Houses, great and small, city and country, play an important part in Anthony Powell's A Dance to the Music of Time. The house is also important in Elizabeth Bowen's fiction; one of her novels is entitled The House in Paris. E. M. Forster's Howards End is another novel that takes its title from a house. The list could be extended considerably.

What might be concluded from the prevalence of houses in the tradition of the English novel is that the English novel is itself, in one sense, traditional. It is concerned with the man who has a stake in society and how the society's values pass from one generation to another. But when we come to the content of the tradition--what are the values to be passed on--we must proceed cautiously, for here Waugh is not in the mainstream of the English novel.

In a later chapter we shall attempt to define Waugh's concept of tradition, but for now we need only recognize that there are two traditions operating in Waugh's fiction: one a sacred and central tradition; the other a secular tradition that is derivative and peripheral. There are points of contact between the two traditions, but a mistake frequently made in discussing Waugh's house imagery is to identify these two traditions. Delsanto and D'Avanzo provide an example of this failure to make proper distinctions in important matters when they write: "The Brideshead estate in the novel is representative of the Roman Catholic Church in the modern world."<sup>13</sup> The fact is that Waugh does not fully endorse any houses in his fiction, including the

Brideshead estate, prior to Sword of Honour.

King's Thursday, a good Tudor house, is transformed by Otto Silenus in Decline and Fall into a modern horror of "ferro concrete and aluminum."<sup>14</sup> By contrast, Anchorage House in Vile Bodies appears acceptable. However, as we hope to show in a later chapter, Anchorage House is in no sense fully endorsed. In Scoop Boot Magna is preferable to the modern hotel which attempts to thwart most of the natural processes of the body, but it is by no means ideal. The last man who understood the "workings of the water system"<sup>15</sup> (in dealing with country houses the estate is to be considered part of the house) has been dead for fifteen years. Hetton in A Handful of Dust is uncomfortable and impractical. If mere Gothic style were to be considered the ideal, Dr. Fagin's Llanabba Castle in Decline and Fall would rival the claims of Hetton.<sup>16</sup> There is a great deal of talk about houses in "Work Suspended," but all that can be concluded is what every city dweller knows, modern apartment buildings quickly grow dilapidated.

Put Out More Flags provides the rough draft for much material that appears both in Brideshead and in Sword of Honour. It is, however, a rough draft; the differences are more striking than the similarities. It is Cedric Lyne's estate, particularly water and what is associated with it, that is similar to Brideshead:

It [the water] rose in clear and copious spring in the hillside above the house and fell in a series of natural cascades to join the considerable stream which flowed more solemnly through the park. He and Angela had eaten a picnic lunch by the spring and looked down on the symmetrical, rectangular building below.

.....  
Cedric stood by the spring, enshrined, now, in a little temple. The architrave was covered with stalactites, the dome was set with real shells and the clear water bubbled out from the feet of a Triton. Cedric and Angela had bought this temple on their honeymoon at a deserted villa in the hills behind Naples.<sup>17</sup>



The resemblance to Brideshead's water system and the fountain at Brideshead, "such a fountain as one might expect to find in a piazza of Southern Italy, such a fountain as was, indeed, found there a century ago by one of Sebastian's ancestors,"<sup>18</sup> are clear enough. However, the traditional associations with water are merely nostalgic in Put Out More Flags. Also, we never see inside the "rectangular building"; because there is no life there; Cedric and Angela's marriage has not been functioning.

It is the secular, derivative tradition which has produced the English country house; and in Waugh's fiction up to Brideshead the inhabitants of these houses are unaware of the points of contact their homes have with the older, sacred tradition. What Waugh's use of the house image in the early novels seems to be saying is that the houses we live in tell us a good deal about ourselves and our desires.

Brideshead and its grounds also have mostly to do with the secular tradition, something primarily aesthetic, which Waugh refers to in the 1960 edition's preface as "our chief national artistic achievement."<sup>19</sup> The Catholic tradition is in the art nouveau chapel which even the insensitive Hooper realizes has been "attached"<sup>20</sup> to the house. The chapel, a wedding gift from Lord Marchmain to his wife, is the latest addition to the estate and is out of harmony with the rest of the house. Also, it is aesthetically inferior, a situation which Waugh regards as common to English Catholicism.<sup>21</sup>

What this aesthetic tradition means in Waugh's fiction has, perhaps, been best expressed by Eric Linklater:

Mr. Waugh's preference for the upper classes is, I fancy, an aesthetic judgment. In comparison with the chaos of modern life, the integrated and purposeful existence on a nobleman's estate--up till the reign, at any rate, of King Edward the Seventh--had an aspect of order and fulfillment which, however deeply it might anger the social conscience,

could surely please that sort of aesthetic conscience which requires design, not only in statuary, but in living.<sup>22</sup>

That the "aesthetic conscience" is pleased, however, does not mean that the whole man is pleased. The system which produced Nanny Hawkins, who was brought up in the Catholic tradition of Lady Marchmain's family, is, perhaps, what is most endorsed by the narrator, but that system functions minimally at Brideshead: the Bishop wants to close the chapel at Brideshead because there are "so few"<sup>23</sup> Catholics there.

Before examining in more detail the image of the house as it operates in Brideshead, it will be profitable to cite what Waugh considers a truly great house, one whose life can be fully endorsed and to which one can be fully committed. It is the palace of Cardinal Charles Borromeo, and it appears not in Waugh's fiction but in his biography of Edmund Campion:

Three hundred guests a month, on an average, passed through these hospitable courts; there all the ways and passages of the vast, ecclesiastical labyrinth seemed to intersect, and in the center of it all, living in ascetic simplicity among the lavish retinue . . . was the dominating figure of the great Cardinal. The pilgrims were received, entertained, blessed and sent on their way, and the immense household went about its duties; in its splendour and order and sanctity, a microcosm of the Eternal Church.<sup>24</sup>

In contrast to this ideal the same work refers to houses like the original form of King's Thursday of Decline and Fall and Brideshead:<sup>25</sup>

Along his road the scenes were familiar enough, but he was seeing them with new eyes; the scars of the Tudor revolution were still fresh and livid; the great houses of the new ruling class were building, and in sharp contrast to their magnificence stood the empty homesteads of the yeomen, evicted to make way for the 'grey-faced sheep' or degraded to day-labour on what had once been their common land; the village churches were empty shells, their altars torn out and their ornaments defaced; while here and there throughout his journey he passed, as, with a different heart, he had often passed before, the buildings of the old monasteries, their roofs stripped of lead and their walls a quarry for the new contractors. The ruins were not yet picturesque; moss and ivy had barely begun their work, and age had not softened the stark lines of change. Many generations

of orderly living, much gentle association, were needed before, under another queen, the State Church should assume the venerable style of Barchester Towers.<sup>26</sup>

The "orderly living" Waugh admires, and the ashlar attractiveness of Barchester Towers' Ullathorne can be felt in the world of Brideshead, but the society's ordering principle is faulty, a fault whose end result is the ghastly modern world.<sup>27</sup> That English country houses like Brideshead have not fallen completely into decay and ruin, a fact remarked on by Waugh in his preface to the revised edition, does not alter the situation. The country houses continue to exist as curiosities for tourists, managed by professionals; no longer are they centers of life for a considerable portion of society.

In the "Et in Arcadia Ego" portion of the novel the Brideshead house and estate supply the setting for an Arcadian idyl by Virgil: "Luxuriant vegetation, eternal spring, and inexhaustible leisure for love."<sup>28</sup> To Charles the time is "the languor of Youth--how unique and quintessential it is! How quickly, how irrevocably, lost!"<sup>29</sup> Brideshead, moreover, is an education for Charles, a natural complement to the Oxford years. Chapter Four, the chapter of summer's and friendship's fullness, is also the chapter of Brideshead itself. Charles receives from it an invaluable education. He revels in all the sense pleasures which enjoyment of the beautiful can bring, but especially in those of sight, touch, and taste.

The most important effect Brideshead has on Charles is to convert him from aesthetic puritanism to the baroque. It is in its baroque features, especially in the Southern Baroque of the Italian fountain, that the derivative tradition of Brideshead is in contact with the central, sacred tradition. Charles's conversion to the baroque is a foreshadowing of his eventual con-

version to Catholicism. The paragraph in which Charles relates his "conversion to the baroque" ends: "I felt a whole new system of nerves alive within me, as though the water that spurted and bubbled among its stones was indeed a life-giving spring."<sup>30</sup> The words "as if" indicate analogy, rather than identity, with the real "life-giving spring" of baptism. Frank Kermode has written of Brideshead: "The consistency of Mr. Waugh's opinions is indicated by his admiration for Baroque Art, the plastic expression of Tridentine Catholicism and a great European movement that left England almost untouched."<sup>31</sup> Lowry Nelson offers further evidence to support the association of the baroque with the Catholic: "Of the several historical 'explanations' of Baroque, perhaps the most persistent is that which links it with the Counter Reformation."<sup>32</sup>

That Waugh intends such an association of architecture and religion might be inferred from his remarks praising Huxley's Antic Hay:

The city is not always James's London. Sometimes it becomes Mediterranean, central to the tradition. The dance winds through piazzas and alleys, under arches, round fountains and everywhere are the embellishments of the old religion.<sup>33</sup>

The sacred tradition, however, is only suggested; Brideshead's dominant effect, at the time, is Arcadian and, as such, unable to sustain either Charles or Sebastian. It is ironic that Charles rejects the chapel, that which is most central to the sacred tradition, on aesthetic grounds.

At the end of their summer's stay at Brideshead, Charles and Sebastian visit Lord Marchmain in Venice. His palace there "was a little less than it sounded, a narrow Palladian facade, mossy steps, a dark archway of rusticated stone." But inside "the piano nobile was in full stature, ablaze with frescoes of the school of Tintoretto. The pallazzo is appropriate to Lord Marchmain; he is suited to Venice (or Venice to him), as Charles recalls the Venetian

fortnight. Venice and Lord Marchmain are Byronic and though his Lordship's face is "slightly weary, slightly sardonic, slightly voluptuous," the total effect is of extremes--both too much and too little. An initial sense of bleakness is replaced by a sense of "incomparable pageant--marble and velvet, the gondola and the speed-boat--as Charles says: "I was drowning in honey, stingless."<sup>34</sup> The "house" in Venice is decaying; it is over-ripe.

The house itself as an image in Book II, "A Twitch Upon the Thread," is seen primarily as a shelter or refuge from harsh, destructive external forces. In Chapter One the ocean liner, a house surrogate, despite its ugly modernity, prefigures Brideshead as private shelter and refuge. It is fitting that the shelter within which Charles first takes physical possession of Julia is by nature such a transient one. On Charles's first evening back at Brideshead with Julia the feeling of threatened refuge becomes overpowering; they have possessed their happiness but question how many nights it can remain unharmed by outside forces. In Book II, Sebastian is the only member of the Flyte family who does not return to seek shelter at Brideshead. In the final chapter the house becomes a temptation as well as a shelter. Lord Marchmain, returning to die in his childhood home, proposes leaving the house to Julia. Since this would force a drastic revision of Bridey's arrangements, Charles asks Julia if she intends to accept it:

"Certainly. It's Papa's to leave as he likes. I think you and I could be very happy here."

It opened a prospect; the prospect one gained at the turn of the avenue, as I had first seen it with Sebastian, of the secluded valley, the lakes falling away one below the other, the old house in the foreground, the rest of the world abandoned and forgotten; a world of its own of peace and love and beauty; a soldier's dream in a foreign bivouac; such a prospect perhaps as a high pinnacle of the temple afforded after the hungry days in the desert and the jackal-haunted nights. Need I reproach myself if

sometimes I was rapt in the vision?<sup>35</sup>

Finally, in the epilogue, it is the rejected art nouveau chapel and its rekindled sanctuary lamp which image the enduring shelter and source of hope that the house itself could not provide.

The old aristocratic house is more aesthetically pleasing than a modern house or flat, but in itself it fails to bring satisfaction and is unworthy of one's commitment. The Soanesque library and Chinese drawing room at Brideshead point the eighteenth-century features of the house, the century which delighted in Pomfret's "The Choice" and glorified the country estate. The judgment on the house which we have derived from Brideshead is completely consistent with Waugh's response to a criticism that he was in love with the splendors of the eighteenth century:

It was Mr. Clive Bell, the champion of post-impressionism who wrote of 'the adorable century,' not I, whose preferences are for the thirteenth or the fourth.<sup>36</sup>

In retrospect, considering the final marriage which emerges from the novel, we see that the house, like the City of God in Western civilization, is always threatened by the barbarians; but it always manages to endure and benefit from the threat. In Book I the threat is moderate, evident in the temporary influence with the family exercised by Mr. Samgrass. In Book II we see the house temporarily filled by Rex and his crowd and threatened to be taken over by Bridey's wife, the vulgar Mrs. Muspratt. In contrast to these cultural barbarians the reader sympathizes with Sebastian, Charles, Julia, and even Lord Marchmain, as people who can aesthetically appreciate the house. However, in Book I Lady Marchmain is also a threat to the house for those who experience it in a merely aesthetic way. The Catholicism which she had attempted to graft onto Brideshead, for a variety of reasons, did not take in a

healthy vigorous way. The threat to merely aesthetic experience, as contrasted to an aesthetic religious experience, is expressed in Book II in a variety of oblique but increasingly powerful ways, culminating in the particular image of the avalanche which controls the last two chapters. The final synthesis of the whole experience would seem to indicate that Ryder acknowledges these threats to the house to have been beneficial.

The images which control the two major points of focus (Books I and II) and the individual chapters of each book are intertwined with the memory as organizing principle, especially the images associated with civilization or culture. Brideshead is the picture of an age, the age between the Wars, as viewed from the Second War. The culture from which images can be drawn is the culture of a type, the educated, artistic, English gentleman of the period. The culture also has its individuality in that it belongs to one Charles Ryder. To be effective, however, there should be little or no reference to items not likely to be part of the cultural furniture of the type, nor should there be a lot of technical business that Charles would know only as an architectural painter. The references should be limited to those with which a cultured gentleman of the age could be expected to be familiar.

The prologue again establishes the pattern, giving us the key for understanding the appropriateness of later images. Ryder is exercising his memory in connection with the incompetent Hooper, even before returning to Brideshead, in an attempt to analyze the differences between Hooper and himself:

. . . Hooper was no romantic. He had not as a child ridden with Rupert's horse or sat among the camp fires at Xanthus-side; at the age when my eyes were dry to all save poetry--that stoic, red-skin interlude which our schools introduce between the fast flowing tears of the child and the man--Hooper had wept often, but never for Henry's speech on St. Crispin's Day, nor for the epitaph

at Thermopylae. The history they taught him had had few battles in it but, instead, a profusion of detail about humane legislation and recent industrial change. Gallipoli, Balaclava, Quebec, Lepanto, Bannockburn, Roncevaux, and Marathon--these, and the Battle in the West where Arthur fell, and a hundred such names whose trumpet notes, even now in my sere and lawless state, called to me irresistibly across the intervening years with all the clarity and strength of boyhood, sounded in vain to Hooper.<sup>37</sup>

It is clear that military history and the fictional accounts (Homer, Shakespeare, and the tellers of the Arthurian tales) of heroic deeds form a significant portion of Ryder's youthful experience. Certainly much of this, the history, at least, Ryder would have studied as a boy in school, but the word "red-skin" and the mention of Arthur's falling suggest his reading was not all in the classics; it included boys' adventure stories. Especially in light of the loneliness of Ryder's boyhood (pp. 41-42, 46), his reading would form a considerable portion of the material from which he would draw his images.

One critic<sup>38</sup> has suggested that Waugh's use of boyhood literature is indicative of his immaturity. This critical position is rather difficult to understand. If a young person's reading is not likely to be influential in his total development as a human being, why have thinkers from Plato to Matthew Arnold expressed great concern over it? Surely Plato did not recommend a particular program of youthful reading to have the whole effort completely discarded for a more sophisticated code of behavior in adult life. Rather, the virtues inculcated through reading of the deeds of noble men--courage, restraint, self-sacrifice, loyalty to comrades and country, etc.--would serve as a foundation upon which wisdom could be built. It would be a mistake to judge that in cataloguing the books in Tony Last's room in A Handful of Dust or having Alastair Digby-Vane-Trumington in Put Out More Flags associate Peter Pastmaster's uniform with the reading of Chums, that Waugh is indulging himself



in misty-eyed nostalgia mourning lost, shallow innocence. Actually, A Handful of Dust furnishes evidence that Waugh, like Plato, recognizes the dangers of the misuse of literature, the difficulties one may bring upon himself by misreading or by misapplying what one reads.<sup>39</sup>

If literature, particularly the literature of adventure, is rooted deeply enough in Ryder's memory so that it is among the first reference that we see, then images drawn from this realm will be integral to the form of the novel, since that form develops from the character and quality of the narrator's memory. The images of savagery, the most extended of which pictures Sebastian as a happy and harmless Polynesian, and the image of the Arctic trapper's cabin (a variation, in one sense, of the house image) that controls the novel's final two chapters are thus integral and appropriate; the "Frozen North" and the "South Sea Isles" are two well-traveled areas of boys' adventure fiction. If we do not recognize what has nourished the memory, these images, especially the Arctic image, will jar. Had the cabin image been drawn from the jungle rather than the Arctic, Charles's futile trek in Central America would have supplied a point of reference. Since these images do not appear to be prepared for by or be related to any of Charles's actual experiences, they may seem superimposed. The difficulty disappears, however, when we are attentive to the opening passages of the prologue and to what they tell us about Ryder's memory.

The image of savagery first occurs when Charles says: "Sebastian and I lived more and more in the shadows and, like a fetish hidden first from the missionary and at length forgotten, the toy bear Aloysius sat unregarded on the chest of drawers in Sebastian's room."<sup>40</sup> The image reappears in the already mentioned happy Polynesian and it recurs again in Julia's concept of Rex as a

primitive savage. The images in this pattern all suggest false conceptions associated with innocence and simplicity.

But of all the material mulched in the sub-soil of Ryder's memory the most important, and the most operative word in his reverie on how he differs from Hooper, is "poetry." An acquaintance with and regard for poetry have always been the mark of a cultured man, the old notion of the homo liber, in Western civilization. Images drawn from poetry dominate both in number and importance the images derived from civilization or culture in the novel.

In keeping with the Arcadian tone of Book I, most of the images, including the controlling image for this major point of focus, are drawn from lyric poetry. The echoes from Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn" have been critically discussed by Rodney Delsanto and Mario D'Avenzo. They point to Ryder's comment in the prologue that the grounds are "still unravished" as the most verbally explicit reference. Another similarity exists in Keats's "little town emptied of its folk" and Brideshead deserted. One of their better analogies deals with Charles's painting Julia: "Ryder, like Keats's unwearied happy melodist, can forever create anew, the result of his happy love."<sup>41</sup> But since Keats's ode may be the most popular Arcadian poem in our language, there are many general tonal similarities. That Truth is Beauty is the largest and most nearly exact similarity; the reverse statement, however, would not be true of Brideshead without strict qualification.

The influence of Coleridge's "Kubla Khan" is also present. Early in Book I, speaking of the unlikelihood of an academic career, Charles says of himself: " . . . for the springs of anarchy rose from deep furnaces where was no solid earth, and burst into the sunlight--a rainbow in its cooling vapors--

with a power the rocks could not repress."<sup>42</sup> Edmund Wilson quite correctly associates this image with the Serpent,<sup>43</sup> just as in an allegorical interpretation of "Kubla Khan" the corresponding image of "rebounding rocks" can be associated with Original Sin and its effects. Later, in Book I, Father Mowbray S.J., protesting the failure of modern culture in Rex, uses a variant of the image: "But these young people have such an intelligent, knowledgeable surface and then the crust suddenly breaks and you look down into depths of confusion you didn't know existed."<sup>44</sup> This image too deals with the unchecked effects of Original Sin.

The Keats and Coleridge influence, however, are minor, enriching in a general way or controlling a particular brief scene, as are the references to Byron associated with Lord Marchmain and Venice. It should not be surprising that the controlling image of Book I, the image most frequently repeated and the one which bears most directly on the central relationship of the focal point, is one associated with T. S. Eliot. Eliot, after all, was the pre-eminent poet of the years entre les deux guerres. Leonard Unger has labeled this image, which abounds in Eliot's poetry from the early "Dans le Restaurant" through the Four Quartets, the rose garden image.<sup>45</sup>

The most striking features of the image of the encounter in the rose garden may be summarized briefly: the setting is a garden with flowers and water present; it occurs in youth; it conveys a sense of presence and fulfillment; it appears to be "out of time"; it actually lasts only a very short time, and it is usually broken by the weakness of one of the persons involved. In conjunction with the "rose garden" image Waugh uses another image frequently employed by Eliot (perhaps most noticeably in "Prufrock"): underwater imagery,

denoting a state of dreaming, remembering, or a mingling of both these states.

The frequency with which Eliot's name appears in this study of Waugh prompts the question of whether or not Eliot is a source for Waugh. Since Waugh's direct borrowings from Eliot include the title and epigraph for one novel, A Handful of Dust, and Anthony Blanche recites the Tiresias passage from The Waste Land, the question is not a groundless one. The purpose of this study, however, is not to set off on a road, much like the one to Xanadu, that would lead to Little Gidding. That Waugh read Eliot, or Ryder would be most likely to, and was influenced in a general way is undeniable, but it is also possible that two authors having a number of things in common, including belief in the importance of tradition (despite minor differences in locating that tradition), should view experience in much the same way. What is important here is the general way, in which Eliot is present to Ryder, as the most immediate portion of the tradition of English poetry.

In the second paragraph of Book I, recalling the circumstances surrounding his first visit to Brideshead, Ryder remembers:

Oxford-submerged now and obliterated, irrevocable as Lyonesse, so quickly have the waters come flooding in--Oxford, in those days, was still a city of aquatint..... It was this cloistral hush which gave our laughter its resonance, and carried it still, joyously, over the intervening clamour.

He picks up the previously quoted Arthurian image in the prologue and associates his youth with that which has sunken beneath the waters of time and memory.

"Cloistral" introduces the enwrapped atmosphere essential to the "rose garden" encounter. Another essential aspect of this encounter, as it is stated in

"Burnt Norton," is that an approach to the experience in the memory can recreate the encounter. This is suggested in Sebastian's musing: "I should like to

bury something precious in every place where I've been happy and then, when I was old and ugly and miserable, I could come back and dig it up and remember."<sup>46</sup>

The first explicit statement of the "rose garden" encounter occurs in conjunction with the luncheon that occasions Charles's first real meeting with Sebastian: "But I was in search of love in those days, and I went full of curiosity and the faint, unrecognized apprehension that here, at last, I should find that low door in the wall, which others, I knew, had found before me, which opened on an enclosed and enchanted garden which was somewhere, not overlooked by any window, in the heart of that grey city." All the associations are in this sentence, if we let them echo for us. An analogous feeling is aroused in Charles at his first sight of Brideshead: "and suddenly a new and secret landscape opened before us."<sup>47</sup>

For Eliot this encounter usually takes place in early childhood. Ryder recalls:

It seems to me that I grew younger daily with each adult habit I acquired. . . . Now, that summer term with Sebastian, it seemed as though I was being given a brief spell of what I had never known, a happy childhood, and though its toys were silk shirts and liqueurs and cigars and its naughtiness high in the catalogue of grave sins, there was something of nursery freshness about us that fell little short of the joys of innocence.<sup>48</sup>

The "naughtiness" is presumably drunkenness, of which there are many degrees, Charles's and Sebastian's being among the less serious. That guilty behavior is present, indicates that their experience is an approach to innocence, not innocence itself. The "naughtiness" is also a warning, the Serpent in the garden, the skull in Arcadia.

Another piece of Ryder's remembered experience is tied into the "rose garden" encounter through his mentioning of innocence. Cara had said of Lord

Marchmain: "When people hate with all that energy, it is something in themselves they are hating. Alex is hating all the illusions of boyhood--innocence, God, hope."<sup>49</sup> Terror is part of Eliot's "rose garden" experience from Dans le Restaurant (1920) through the Four Quartets. This terror, or horror, is expressed in a number of ways; but what it results in is the man's breaking off the encounter, ending the epiphanic moment, running away--as Lord Marchmain ran away. Perhaps Eliot's essential judgment of the aspect of the situation appears in Burnt Norton: "Human kind cannot bear very much reality." The reality which human kind finds so difficult to bear is the reality of self-knowledge and self-acceptance. As another Catholic novelist, Georges Bernanos, has written: "The supreme grace would be to love oneself in all simplicity."<sup>50</sup> But such a grace would be a final thing and the "rose garden" encounter is an experience of promise, not completion. Or, as Charles Ryder might term it, it is a forerunner.

The whole month at Brideshead when the young men are alone during Sebastian's convalescence is suffused with the imagery of the "rose garden": the terrace with its baroque fountain, which Charles tries to draw by the hour, is an enclosed flower garden; he and Sebastian search for strawberries and figs in the kitchen gardens; the room in which Charles paints a medallion is later referred to by Lady Marchmain as the garden room.

When Charles looks back at this period of his life, from what he believes at the time to be his final departure from Brideshead, memory, burial, underwater, and "rose garden" images come all together. The central image in a passage commencing with buried treasure and ending with emergence from an under-sea- world is: "A door had shut, the low door in the wall I had sought

and found in Oxford; open it now and I should find no enchanted garden."<sup>51</sup>

The final recurrence of the image coincides with Charles's full realization of his loss, when he leaves Sebastian with Kurt. The comparative sordidness of the surroundings mirrors the falling off in the quality of the experience: "So I left him with his friend in the little enclosed house at the end of the alley. There was nothing more I could do for Sebastian."<sup>52</sup>

Before going on to Book II, it is necessary to mention several other supporting image patterns drawn from the culture or tradition of which Charles is a part. Since memory frames the whole, there are a number of ways in which an image can be appropriate. The image can be termed integral if it is faithful to the experience as it occurred, as it has been remembered, or a combination of these.

An example of the latter sort of image is connected with the remonstrance of Charles's cousin Jasper. Looking back on the incident from twenty years of additional experience, Charles reflects: "I could tell him that all the wickedness of that time was like the spirit they mix with the pure grape of the Douro, heady stuff full of dark ingredients; it at once enriched and retarded the whole process of adolescence as the spirit checks the fermentation of the wine, renders it undrinkable, so that it must lie in the dark, year in, year out, until it is brought up at last fit for the table."<sup>53</sup> Not only is the comparison fertile in its thought, but it is a thoroughly appropriate image for several reasons: drinking was one of Jasper's objections; Charles will shortly end their tete-a-tete by offering him an afternoon glass of champagne; we have previously been told that learning to carry one's wine was part of an Oxford education; and we will later hear that, to Charles, wine would be an enduring satisfaction.

Aesthetic regard for wine, if the daily newspapers offer any evidence of popular opinion, has been and continues to be something which draws the charge of snobbism and invites parody. However, even disregarding the spiritual associations wine has in a Christian civilization, there are ample reasons why wine should be a part of the tradition from a purely humanistic point of view. The whole process of wine-making is historical, its various arts being passed down, refined and enriched, from generation to generation. Furthermore, humanism has traditionally been concerned with the worth of the individual and wine is individual. Most fine wine differs from year to year, region to region, and vineyard to vineyard; it even differs if the grapes are grown on the reverse slope of the same hill. Wine is not a product of modern standardization like Coca Cola. It is, therefore, understandable that if one wants everyone to be the same, whether in the name of Marxism or democracy, one would be annoyed with Waugh's regard for wine.

An example of imagery appropriate to the actual experience, while still being part of the whole cultural pattern, occurs in Anthony Blanche's attempted seduction of Charles in Chapter Two. Blanche's ploy is that Charles is an artist and that the charm of Sebastian and his family would be disastrous to an artist, particularly during "the tenderest stage of his growth." Consequently, the portraits which Anthony sketches for Charles of Sebastian's family are all in artistic terms. Bridey "has the face as though an Aztec sculptor had attempted a portrait of Sebastian"; Lord Marchmain is "Byronic"; Lady Marchmain "a Reinhardt nun," "part of some Celtic play or a heroine from Maeterlinck"; Julia is "Renaissance tragedy," "a face of flawless Florentine Quattrocento beauty."<sup>54</sup>



Of all the mentions of art, artists, and artifacts, which help to paint the picture of an age in Book I, the one that continues to haunt the remainder of Book II and reverberate in the back of the memory, with its echoes of frustrated love from Yeats's "Among School Children," is Julia's "face of flawless Florentine Quattrocento beauty." Julia and Sebastian bear a marked physical resemblance to each other, so the Florentine Quattrocento can be applied to Sebastian also. Scanning the list of Florentine artists of the period for resemblances to render the allusion concrete, we are arrested at the name of Sandro Botticelli. The resemblances are remarkable. The effect which Botticelli's Primavera has had on two critics--"Botticelli has exquisitely rendered here that feeling of sadness which attends the sight of youthful grace, so fragile and so ephemeral; of 'Beauty that must die.'"<sup>55</sup>--is the same effect which Sebastian has on Charles. Walter Pater's remarks on Botticelli's figures are unusually appropriate to Charles's memories of Sebastian and Julia, and, to a lesser extent, of Cordelia and Lady Marchmain:

. . . The peculiar sentiment with which he infuses his profane and sacred persons, comely, and in a certain sense like angels, but with a sense of displacement or loss about them--the wistfulness of exiles, conscious of a passion and energy greater than any known issue of them explains, which runs through all his varied work with a sentiment of ineffable melancholy.<sup>56</sup>

If the words "profane and sacred" are coincidental, their relation to the subtitle of Brideshead renders the coincidence a striking one. Once the association with Botticelli has been made, a further resemblance can be seen in Book II. Julia's view of herself in her outburst on sin has a visual correlation in Botticelli's La Derelitta.

In Book II of Brideshead, in keeping with the compressed and heightened dramatic intensity of the action, the imagery drawn from the arts shifts from

the lyric to the dramatic. Where "Kubla Khan," "Ode on a Grecian Urn," and "Burnt Norton" were felt in Book I, in Book II Julia refers to her brother Bridey as a "character from Chekov" (Leonid in The Cherry Orchard comes to mind); Bridey would like to paint subjects from Macbeth: Charles says their actions resulting from Bridey's bombshell about living in sin are "like the setting of a comedy" and Lorenzo's speech, which opens Act V of The Merchant of Venice, in which he describes the moonlit setting at Belmont is recalled in the description of Brideshead's threatened moonlight: "The stone balustrade of the terrace might have been the Trojan walls, and in the silent park might have stood the Grecian tents where Cressid lay that night."<sup>57</sup> These four images are of minor importance, but of major significance are the numerous images drawn from and associated with King Lear.

Lear is first suggested in Book I when we discover that the youngest daughter of the Flyte family is named Cordelia. At the close of Book I when Cordelia exhibits wisdom beyond her years in evaluating the members of her family, the suggestion is reinforced. The Lear suggestion becomes most explicit in the powerful imagery used during the first onslaught of the storm at sea in Chapter One of Book II. Like Lear, Charles feels bayed about by the forces of insanity on the luxury liner, "huge without splendour," "where wealth is no longer gorgeous and power has no dignity." Feeling like "Lear on the heath," Charles had "summoned cataracts and hurricanes." His call is almost immediately answered. The captain's table is deserted, leaving only Charles, Celia, and Julia for the following exchange:

. . . and telepathically, Julia said, "Like King Lear."  
 "Only each of us is all three of them."  
 "What can you mean?" asked my wife.  
 "Lear, Kent, Fool."

"Oh, dear, its like that agonizing Foulough coversation over again. Don't try and explain."

"I doubt if I could," I said.<sup>58</sup>

The moment is crucial for Charles. What does he mean? Certainly all three have acted rashly and willfully, "but ever slenderly knowing themselves," like Lear; all three are in the grip of forces they do not understand; all three carry on in various ways of service like Kent (Celia serves Charles's art; Julia serves partially her position and partially her upbringing; and Charles serves beauty); Julia, as Fool, is beginning to teach Charles wisdom. Are Charles and Celia like the Fool in being incomplete, in having fears, in counseling accommodation? Any number of possibilities suggest themselves as the ripples of association keep widening.

Just prior to the onset of the storm, Charles has re-encountered Julia for the first time and discovered that in the ten years since he had seen her last, she had acquired both patience and humility. These two virtues are the foundations of wisdom, which includes (if it is not actually defined by) self-knowledge, the lesson that Lear learned so painfully and so magnificently. Like Lear, concerned for the welfare of the Fool during the height of the storm's fury, Julia is concerned for Bridey on his engagement night, despite Bridey's having dealt her a shattering verbal blow. This is the girl of Book I who said about Sebastian: "If he wants to be always tight, why doesn't he go to Kenya or somewhere where it doesn't matter."<sup>59</sup>

Other associations from Lear cluster around this central metaphor on the necessity of humility and patience. Most obvious is the wisdom of the heart expressed by the adult Cordelia's passion to serve others, despite her apparent failure to fit a vocational niche. Another is Lord Marchmain's death-

bed ramblings in which he deludes himself with a paraphrase of the Fool's advice on how to have "more than two tens to the score"! "Better today, I have lived carefully, sheltered myself from the cold winds, eaten moderately of what was in season, drank fine claret, slept in my own sheets; I shall live long."<sup>60</sup> This speech raises a number of questions as to the final efficacy of natural precautions and endeavors, just as do a number of the Fool's speeches in Lear.

The Lear imagery is closely associated, perhaps especially in the popular mind, with the controlling image of Book II, the storm. Just as in Lear, the storm in Brideshead is ambiguous. It appears to be horrendous and destructive, but it is through its agency that wisdom and reconciliation are achieved. The storm at sea which brings Charles and Julia together as lovers controls Chapter One. While Charles feels the storm of their mutual passion is quickening for him, it cannot be denied that it also destroys whatever little had remained of his marriage. In Chapters Two and Three the gathering storm clouds of war threaten the sinking firelight, the moonlight, and the lime-scented evening which Charles and Julia have temporarily possessed. The image of the avalanche controls the final two chapters.

There is a special fitness in the use of the avalanche to describe the final stages of the relationship between Julia and Charles. There is an ambiguity in the experience and the image that may not be immediately apparent. An avalanche, in a sense, is the end result of a number of storms. It is when the storms are over that the avalanche comes, set in motion by the light and warmth of the sun. So it is a force traditionally associated with the good, the sun and warmth, that triggers the apparent disaster. But that which is destroyed, the self-contained place that is "dry and neat and warm inside,"

contains light and warmth. It also contains food and books and skis. When the avalanche comes this place will "crash open and splinter and disappear, rolling with the avalanche into the ravine." After the avalanche had gone, what remains "glittered and lay still in the silent valleys,"<sup>61</sup> The melting of Julia's heart to the warmth of God's grace does not take place until the first storm of passion has subsided. The relationship which the avalanche destroyed was self-contained; it held its own order and light and warmth and human good. A good has been swept away, no doubt of it; but the light in the ensuing silence is more brilliant than the light of the cabin's oil lamp and fire, and what was self-contained is now open. It would be a mistake to read "silence" as complete absence or emptiness. In countless spiritual writings silence is pregnant with the Word of God.

Another way of putting the matter, one in harmony with Brideshead's imagery, is that only a house built upon rock can withstand the storm. Sebastian was the first of the prodigals to return to his Father's house--the monastery in North Africa--a house built upon the rock of Peter. His return functions partly as a preparation for the return of the other prodigals, Julia and Lord Marchmain, and for the conversion of the exiled Charles Ryder.

In the epilogue any remaining ambiguities are resolved. The images of the house, the storm, the military, and art converge in the final few paragraphs. That which had been rejected, the art-nouveau chapel and its "beaten copper [sanctuary] lamp of deplorable design," which is now rekindled, has become the cornerstone of a new life, whose proper dwelling place is eternity. The final synthesis of Ryder's memory is the recognition that, whatever their sins and offenses, that lamp "could not have been lit but for the builders

and the tragedians"; and he accepts his role in the drama with the cheerfulness of supernatural hope in a naturally bleak situation. The image of the lamp, "the flame which the old knights saw from their bombs, which they saw put out; that flame burns again for other soldiers, far from home, farther, in heart, than Acre or Jerusalem."<sup>62</sup> shines for Ryder in the darkness, lighting the path of his journey, a wedding trip called a crusade, to his first, last, and permanent home.

In summation, then, the imagery in Brideshead is extremely rich, appropriate to its parts, and integral to the whole. Our study here by no means exhausts Brideshead's imagery; our concentration along organizational or structural lines has precluded examining every image. On successive re-readings of the novel, the imagery continues to challenge and delight. Like Charles before Brideshead's fountain, the reader attuned to the novel's imagery, "probing its shadows, tracing its lingering echoes," will end by "rejoicing in all its clustered feats of daring and invention."<sup>63</sup>

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>James Joyce, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (New York: The Viking Press, 1959), p. 209.

<sup>2</sup>T. S. Eliot, "The Metaphysical Poets," in Selected Essays (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1950), p. 247.

<sup>3</sup>BR, p. 82.

<sup>4</sup>Churchill, "The House of Evelyn Waugh," p. 123.

<sup>5</sup>Bergonzi, "Evelyn Waugh's Gentleman," 30.

<sup>6</sup>BR (revised edition), p. 10.

<sup>7</sup>BR, p. 238.

<sup>8</sup>BR, p. 6.

<sup>9</sup>Harold C. Goddard, The Meaning of Shakespeare (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), pp. 391-92.

<sup>10</sup>Evelyn Waugh, "Desert Islander," review of In a Valley of This Restless Mind, by Malcolm Muggeridge, in the Spectator, CLXC (May 27, 1938), 978.

<sup>11</sup>BR, p. 256.

<sup>12</sup>Carens, "The Satiric Art of Evelyn Waugh," pp. 24-31; McCay, "Idea and Pattern in the Novels of Evelyn Waugh," 192 ff; Delsanto and D'Avanzo, "Truth and Beauty in BR," 142, 147; Wasson, "HD: Critique of Victorianism," 331; and Churchill, "The House of Evelyn Waugh," passim, all treat the image of the house in Waugh's fiction. Leo Hines, "Waugh and His Critics," Commonweal, LXXVI (April 13, 1962), 60-63 gives the best succinct analysis of the house image.

<sup>13</sup>Delsanto and D'Avanzo, "Truth and Beauty in BR," 142.

<sup>14</sup>DF, p. 159.

<sup>15</sup>Scoop, p. 21.

<sup>16</sup>Richard Wasson, "HD: Critique of Victorianism," 331, writes: "The Gothic Hetton is only an attempt to disguise the break in the tradition . . . The 'city' he [Tony] seeks is not the Holy City, the City of God, but rather a transfigured Hetton. His journey is to Camelot, not Rome."

<sup>17</sup>POMF, pp. 215, 216

<sup>18</sup>BR, p. 81.

<sup>19</sup>BR (revised edition), p. 10.

<sup>20</sup>BR, p. 16.

<sup>21</sup>Evelyn Waugh, "Come Inside," in The Road to Damascus, ed. by John A. O'Brien (Garden City, New York: Doubleday), 1949, p. 18, Waugh states: "Catholics meet in modern buildings, often of deplorable design, and are usually served by simple Irish missionaries."

<sup>22</sup>Linklater, The Art of Adventure, p. 56.

<sup>23</sup>BR, p. 92.

<sup>24</sup>Evelyn Waugh, Edmund Campion (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1946), p. 78. Hereafter this text will be referred to as EC.

<sup>25</sup>Brideshead, as it exists, goes back to Tudor times. Charles is told by Sebastian: "Then in Inigo Jones's time we took a fancy to the valley and pulled the castle down, carted the stores up here and built a new house" (BR, p. 79).

<sup>26</sup>EC, p. 144.

<sup>27</sup>Wasson, "HD: Critique of Victorianism," 327, states perceptively: "Tony's road to hell is paved with the literature of the Victorian era, which in its attempt to preserve the picturesque trappings and the ethical values of Christianity sacrificed the essence of the faith."

<sup>28</sup>Thus Erwin Panafsky describes Virgil's treatment of Arcadia.

<sup>29</sup>BR, p. 79.

<sup>30</sup>BR, p. 82.

<sup>31</sup>Frank Kermode, "Mr. Waugh's Cities," Encounter, XV (November, 1960), 64.

<sup>32</sup>Lowry Nelson, Jr. Baroque Lyric Poetry, pp. 8-9. Nelson cites as examples of this linking, Werner Weisbach, Der Barock als Kunst der Gegenreformation, Berlin, 1921; and Paul Hankamer, Deutsche Gegenreformation und deutscher Barock, Stuttgart, 1935 (p. 9, m. 12).

<sup>33</sup>Evelyn Waugh, "Youth at the Helm and Pleasure at the Prow," The London Magazine, II (August, 1955), 53.

<sup>34</sup>BR, pp. 96, 98, 101.



<sup>35</sup>BR, pp. 321-22.

<sup>36</sup>Evelyn Waugh, "Mr. Waugh Replies," Spectator, CXCI (July 3, 1953), 24.

<sup>37</sup>BR, p. 9.

<sup>38</sup>D. S. Savage, "The Innocence of Evelyn Waugh," The Western Review, XIV (Spring, 1950), 197, states: "As a serious novelist he endeavors to comprehend experience but is prevented by the mist of sentiment exhaled from a childish or adolescent innocence which has never, really been outgrown."

<sup>39</sup>See n. 26 of this chapter.

<sup>40</sup>BR, pp. 105-06.

<sup>41</sup>Delsanto and D'Avanzo, "Truth and Beauty in BR," pp. 143-152.

<sup>42</sup>BR, p. 40.

<sup>43</sup>Wilson, Classics and Commercials, p. 301.

<sup>44</sup>BR, p. 193.

<sup>45</sup>Unger thoroughly examines Eliot's use of this image in "T. S. Eliot's Rose Garden," in T. S. Eliot: A Selected Critique, ed. by Leonard Unger (New York: Rinehart & Company, inc., 1948), pp. 374-94.

<sup>46</sup>BR, pp. 21, 24.

<sup>47</sup>BR, pp. 31, 34.

<sup>48</sup>BR, p. 45.

<sup>49</sup>BR, p. 103.

<sup>50</sup>Georges Bernanos, The Diary of a Country Priest, trans. by Pamela Morris (Macmillan Paperbacks ed.; New York: The MacMillan Company, 1962), p. 254.

<sup>51</sup>BR, p. 169.

<sup>52</sup>BR, p. 216.

<sup>53</sup>BR, p. 45.

<sup>54</sup>BR, pp. 57, 54, 55.

<sup>55</sup>Leonello Venturi and Rosabianca Shira-Venturi; Italian Painting: The Creators of the Renaissance (Geneva: Albert Shira, 1950), p. 194. Much of what is said in this work about Botticelli also applies remarkably well to Waugh. For example, the authors claim, contrary to the Botticelli legend,

there is "boldness," "moral force," and "a broad monumental scale" in his painting, as well as the acknowledged "technical competence" (p. 185).

<sup>56</sup>Walter Pater, The Renaissance, Mentor Books (New York: The New American Library, 1959), p. 49.

<sup>57</sup>BR, pp. 258, 291, 295.

<sup>58</sup>BR, pp. 237, 247, 248.

<sup>59</sup>BR, p. 162.

<sup>60</sup>BR, p. 333.

<sup>61</sup>BR, pp. 311, 341.

<sup>62</sup>BR, p. 351.

<sup>63</sup>BR, p. 82.

### CHAPTER III

#### SWORD OF HONOUR: THE STRUCTURE

Shortly after the publication of Scott-King's Modern Europe (1949), a novelette satirizing life in the new, post-war "democracies," Waugh told Harvey Breit: "I suppose I do want to write a novel or two novels about the war; it would be a study of the idea of chivalry."<sup>1</sup> The fulfillment of this desire is the Crouchback trilogy: Men at Arms (1952), Officers and Gentlemen (1955), and Unconditional Surrender (1961). In 1965, shortly before his death, Waugh saw through the press a recension of the three volumes as a single novel entitled Sword of Honour.<sup>2</sup>

While this "final" version of the three novels will serve as our basic text, we shall take advantage of referring to chapter headings, characters, and incidents appearing in the original three volumes which have been excised from Sword of Honour whenever these excisions provide insights into the work's structure and theme. In his preface to the recension Waugh stated:

The three books of which this is a recension, appeared at intervals throughout a decade with the less than candid assurance (dictated by commercial interests) that each was to be regarded as a separate, independent work. It was unreasonable to expect the reader to follow a continuous, continued plot. Repetitions and discrepancies occurred, which, I hope, are here excised. I have also removed passages which, on re-reading, appeared tedious.<sup>3</sup>

The difficulty is that Waugh's taste appears to have become dryer with the passage of time and what may appear "tedious" to him as he reviews work done ten years before, may be both meaningful and delightful to the reader. As we

have already seen in Brideshead, Waugh's revisions have not always been beneficial ones.

Sword of Honour has, at any rate, received its share of praise, especially in the brief appraisals following Waugh's death which appeared in the popular journals. Time magazine called it his "masterpiece," and said it "is now widely considered the best British novel of World War II."<sup>4</sup> This evaluation contrasts with the opinions of such sympathetic readers of Waugh as Frederick Stopp and Msgr. Ronald Knox, both of whom, however, at the time of their writing had only segments of the trilogy to judge. "With Men at Arms," says Msgr. Knox, "Mr. Waugh has come out again on a plateau; less breathtaking than those lonely heights (Brideshead Revisited and Helena), but with a purer air than the valleys of his youth."<sup>5</sup> Stopp's comment, made after two volumes of the trilogy had appeared is that Waugh's achievement after Helena is "followed by a--perhaps temporary--decline in the novels of Army life."<sup>6</sup> James Carens and Thomas Paine Churchill, who read Waugh primarily for his satiric and comic elements, on the other hand, find the trilogy more successful than Brideshead or Helena.<sup>7</sup> The novelist Kingsley Amis, a man whose social and political views differ radically from Waugh's, finds that the completed work lacks vitality and abounds in snobbery.<sup>8</sup> Bernard Bergonzi, who found Brideshead loaded with snobbery, but who likes Sword of Honour, finds it "is one of the most thorough-going satires on military life on record," and its final effect is that "the dominating myth of much of Waugh's work is deflated."<sup>9</sup>

In the critical reaction thus briefly sketched, it becomes apparent that, to date, those who have praised Sword of Honour highly have done so because in the satirical aspects of the work they have found what they hold to be an appropriate reaction to the modern experience of war. In general, the more cosmic

the satire in the novel appears to the critic, the more highly he values the work. In some cases this has led to the always dangerous critical practice of identifying the author with the central character--the inadequacies of Guy Crouchback are viewed as Waugh's efforts at self-mockery.<sup>10</sup> While admitting that satire is a strong element in the work, and that there may even be some truth in the self-mockery view, unless we recognize the work's final affirmation of positive values, despite all that has been satirized, we will have missed the author's intention and inevitably will have under-valued his work.

The author's intention as stated very generally in his preface to the recension reads: "I sought to give a description of the Second World War as it was seen and experienced by a single, uncharacteristic Englishman, and to show its effect on him."<sup>11</sup> Before inquiring into the specific nature of the "effect" that the War had on Guy Crouchback, for a fuller grasp of our author's subject let us return to his statement made at the time the materials must have been incubating in his mind: "the idea of chivalry." Either the words have been ignored, or an over-simplified meaning has been assigned to them. The idea of chivalry as it was first developed in medieval times had as its basis a two-fold ideal of action: to defend the Faith and to succor the weak. We need only think of the term "robber baron" or the writings of Erasmus and St. Thomas More on the wars between Christian states to see how the ideal was corrupted in actual practice. Actual corruption, however, does not deny the value of the ideal; it simply attests to the difficulty of its attainment.

Thanks to President Eisenhower, the phrase "Crusade in Europe" may not ring so archaically in our ears as does the "idea of chivalry"; yet the word "Crusade" expresses something quite closely associated with chivalry. The Crusades, perhaps the most significant events, socially and politically, of the

Middle Ages, were launched through an appeal to chivalry's two-fold ideal. It is much the same sort of appeal that launches Guy Crouchback into World War II. The beginning of Sword of Honour's plot is the Russian-German alliance of 1939--an unholy alliance to Guy: "The enemy at last was in plain view, huge and hateful, all disguise cast off. It was the Modern Age in arms. Whatever the outcome there was a place for him in that battle."<sup>12</sup> On the day he leaves Italy to seek his part in this holy war, Guy dedicates himself on the tomb of an English crusader, Roger of Waybroke, who had never reached the Holy Land but had died fighting for an Italian Count in a local squabble. Sir Roger's title, Waybroke, and the circumstances of his death foreshadow the difficulties awaiting Guy in his attempt to realize the ideals of chivalry in his own crusade.

The idea of a crusade and what it entails had been in Waugh's mind for some time, at least since his own war experiences. In 1947, contrasting a Christian approach toward easing the errors of death with the concept embodied in Forest Lawn, he wrote:

Some of the simpler crusaders probably believed that they would go straight to Heaven if they died in the Holy Land. But there is a catch in most of these dispensations, a sincere repentance, sometimes an arduous pilgrimage, sometimes a monastic rule in the closing years. Dr. Eaton is the first man to offer eternal salvation at an inclusive charge as part of his undertaking service.<sup>13</sup>

All three "catches" are portrayed in Sword of Honour: Guy's repentance, his certainly "arduous pilgrimage," and Tony Box-Bender's entering a monastery.

When Guy begins his crusade, which is also an "arduous pilgrimage," he subsumes the two-fold idea of chivalry under the heading of justice. Annoyed at the lack of British indignation over Russia's invasion of Poland, Guy says: "Then why go to war at all? If all we want is prosperity, the hardest bargain Hitler made would be preferable to victory. If we are concerned with justice

the Russians are as guilty as the Germans." "The old soldiers"<sup>14</sup> to whom Guy addresses these remarks are not in the least impressed; a concern for justice is beyond their ken. No satisfactory consensus is reached on the causes and objectives of the war. These inconclusive discussions leave Guy baffled and lonely, but his immediate concern is to get into the war--to begin his crusade. On one level, then, the novel from its beginning tells the story of how Guy comes to distinguish the components of the chivalric ideal and to recognize the extent to which he can effect these components in his own limited situation within the broader context of national and international indifference to justice.

The nature of this subject matter poses a problem of handling different from friendship and marriage, Brideshead's subject matter. While no Christian would deny that there is a communal aspect to friendship and marriage, the immediate concern of these experiences is personal rather than communal. The first person point of view is appropriate to Brideshead; it conveys the necessary sense of intimacy. But the very essence of the idea of chivalry is communal, directed to the well-being, not of the person, but of the whole Christian community. Therefore, such a subject demands a broad treatment. However, because the community ultimately depends upon the chivalry of the individual, there must be some sort of balance effected between the personal and the objective, external and the internal. The "idea of chivalry" implies that the world (communal) situation is not a background against which a personal drama is played, nor is personal life merely an insignificant adjunct to the world situation; rather, there is a simultaneous development of both the personal and the communal.

This simultaneous development presents Waugh with a problem he had not previously confronted. In Brideshead the "world" is strictly background. In the early novels there is little personal development: Paul Pennyfeather, Adam Fenwick-Syme, John Boot, and Tony Last do not change; Put Out More Flags closes on the advent of a supposed change in Basil Seal. Nor does the problem occur in Helena, where the events in the world are in the safe controlled past.

The world situation in Sword of Honour, usually the object of satire, can be handled by the techniques Waugh employed so successfully in the early novels: clipped passages of absurd yet believable dialogue, a few well chosen physical details, the appearance of a wide variety of comic characters in complementary and contrasting pairs, use of ironic quotation, and the previously mentioned "flash-point" technique. Stopp points out an excellent example of this last technique when Waugh juxtaposes the scenes of Grace-Grundling-Marchpole's "Most Secret" index and Guy's father praying before another "Most Secret Authority."<sup>15</sup> Another more grimly comic use of the technique is the contrasting of the two lines of action followed by Guy and Major Fido Hound during the last stages of the surrender of Crete.

To balance all these devices used in the satires with the cold detachment so valued by Edmund Wilson and Sean O'Faolain, Waugh somehow must create a central character "round" enough, significant enough, to engage our interest and sympathies on a personal level and who would, at the same time, fit convincingly into the world picture as it is drawn. Making us care about what happens to Guy Crouchback, while not an easy task, is nevertheless essential to the success of the whole work.

A brief look at the main outlines of Guy Crouchback's character may



clarify the task Waugh set himself. Guy is not young, as heroes in novels go, and he feels much older than his thirty-five (almost thirty-six) years in 1939 at the beginning of his pilgrimage. He has been a failure at marriage and in the world of affairs. He recognizes that the natives of Santa Dulcina find him, alone among all their foreign residents, not simpatico: "On the lowest, as on the highest plain, there was no sympathy between him and his fellow men."<sup>16</sup> On the other hand, he possesses virtues, a number of which, though not those normally associated with heroes of romantic fiction, are familiar enough in serious fiction. Joseph Conrad's Marlow, for example, both embodies and admires a number of the virtues Guy possesses. Guy is restrained; he has a strong sense of personal responsibility and fulfillment of duty; and he works. In bad times Guy had almost made farming in Kenya pay; he had expended considerable effort in trying to develop a wine industry at Santa Dulcina; he had tried to write a book and to establish a tourist agency; in the eight years preceding the war he had not been idle. Even now during the course of the war itself, he is never content to remain idle, but is always seeking where he might most usefully be employed. In addition to these Conradian virtues, Guy has a strict sense of fair play, is honest and open-handed in business dealings with others, is concerned about justice, and is intelligent enough and honest enough to recognize his own faults and accuse himself of guilt.

Through the failure of his marriage eight years prior to the action of the trilogy itself, Guy "had suffered a tiny stroke of paralysis; all his spiritual faculties were just perceptibly impaired." "He felt himself destitute, possessed of nothing save a few dry grains of faith."<sup>17</sup> It must be admitted that this is a spiritual and emotional situation not likely to be very attractive to a wide popular audience, especially when we consider the

contemporary cult of youth. Perhaps it is also true that Guy was presented to a public that was, and still is, dazzled by the promise of evolution and blind to the warming of entropy as suggested by the second law of thermodynamics. Nor is there any certainty that "the spirit of the age" will ever come round to placing a valuation on faith similar to Kierkegaard's in Fear and Trembling. However, it may be that a reader past the first flush of youthful confidence and enthusiasm will be able to empathize considerably with Guy's "impaired" state. If faith, which the journals of religious opinion are currently telling us is totally out of fashion today, is held in abeyance, Guy's intelligence, decency, and limitations could make him Everyman, at least the Everyman who is likely to be reading a novel today at age thirty-five or older.

However a popular audience might regard Guy's spiritual-emotional state, it is those "dry grains of faith" in which Waugh is interested, those and the ever-present problem of illusion and reality. As Guy embarks on his pilgrimage he has no illusions about himself as a lover or a man of affairs, those subjects of so much fiction. But he does have illusions about the more profoundly difficult matters of the nature of justice, the just cause, and faith.

What Sword of Honour is about, then, stated in a somewhat more specific way, is the exposure of false concepts of faith and justice in the world engaged in and emerging from World War II and the dispelling of these illusions in Guy, while at the same time it indicates his growing grasp and acceptance of reality in these matters.

The techniques which Waugh employs to develop our understanding of and concern for Guy Crouchback are standard ones, but they are used with mastery. One such technique is the use of comparison and contrast. Early in the novel

we are told: "Despite the forty years that divided them there was a marked likeness between Mr. Crouchback and Guy. Mr. Crouchback was rather the taller and he wore an expression of steadfast benevolence quite lacking in Guy." The terms of the comparison continue to function throughout the entire work. At first it is their differences, for example, Guy's inability to say, "Here's how!"<sup>18</sup> in response to Major Tickeridge's toast, that are most apparent. Gradually, however, through a process resembling the mysterious operation of grace and free choice, Guy--stumbling, falling, regaining his feet, but pushing on--arrives at a position close to his father's. Finally, Guy's sense of justice, like his father's, abounds more than that of the scriptural Pharisees. The growth of Guy's sense of justice and his growth in self-knowledge are gradual; there are no sudden wrenches or twistings to make the original comparison with his father appear valid; but, the matter is handled so delicately, it would have been difficult to affirm the comparison's validity at any given point midway through the novel.

Waugh both compares Guy with other characters such as Apthorpe, Ivor Claire, and Ritchie Hook, and contrasts him to Trimmer, Tommy Blackhouse, Ian Kilbannock, and Frank de Souza. These comparisons and contrasts reveal further facets of Guy's essential blend of decency, intelligence, and limitation. Of Waugh's previous characters, perhaps Guy most closely resembles Cedric Lyne of Put Out More Flags. The two share common military experiences: both are made battalion Intelligence officer, and both are put in charge of the Officers Mess with the same dismal results. More importantly, each is the abandoned party in a broken marriage, a situation which gives a melancholic cast to each of their lives.

The differences between the two, however, are also striking. Though

both are knowledgeable about and interested in painting, Cedric Lyne is much more the aesthete. Conversely, there is more virility in Guy, a toughness quite foreign to Cedric Lyne. While we are told Cedric "was always laughing up his sleeve,"<sup>19</sup> Guy's humor is direct and inclined to be a bit acid. James Carens has referred to Guy as being "inarticulate"<sup>20</sup>; he is anything but that. The melancholic tinge to his temperament is deceptive; he is most often able to verbally handle such different types as Apthorpe and Ian Kilbannock in fine fashion. For example, Guy derives a great number of jokes from Apthorpe's pompous lack of wit in the thunder-box affair. One of the more humorous moments comes when Apthorpe finally begins to suspect Guy's intense interest in the precise time when Apthorpe dons his steel helmet, "before or after lowering the costume." Guy repeats he must be able to visualize the scene, saying: "When we are old men, memories of things like this will be our chief comfort." Also, in the matter of the visual effects of the London blitz Guy overrides Ian Kilbannock: "'No,' said Guy firmly. He would not accept correction on matters of art from this former journalist. 'Not Martin. The sky line is too low. The scale is less than Babylonian.'"<sup>21</sup> Only in the supernatural order is Guy relatively inarticulate through most of the novel. Most importantly, unlike any previous Waugh character, Guy is the product of a complete, loving family; and he has his religion, those "dry grains of faith."

Waugh also takes us into Guy's thoughts. He is the only character whom we see with any frequency, in depth from the inside. With the other characters, even those of some complexity, such as Guy's father, Guy's wife Virginia, Ludovic, and Frank de Souza, Waugh limits himself to a brief editorial comment: "All save Ludovic, godless at the helm"; "Virginia, as near as is humanly

possible, was incapable of shame, but she had a firm residual sense of the appropriate."<sup>22</sup> It is almost strictly through their words and actions that these other characters reveal themselves. Privileged information is not as respected as it is in James's The Ambassadors--it is generally restricted to Guy. We are shown not only Guy's thoughts and his reactions to events which are taking place, but also his musings on the past and the future. We know Guy from the inside; we know the other characters as observers would know them.

Having determined the subject matter of the trilogy and commented briefly on a few of its techniques, we may turn to the question of the relationship of its parts. There is a single whole action, which has a beginning, a middle, and an end. The beginning, as has been mentioned, is the Russian-German alliance of 1939 that signals for Guy the advent of the war. The end is the situation brought about by the "unconditional surrender," a term of multiple significance, which ends the war. The middle is the war itself. Waugh, consciously or unconsciously, also follows Aristotle's advice to imitate Homer in not attempting to tell the story of the whole war. Since he is not concerned with a military history of the war, but rather faith and justice, Waugh is not bound to give a battle by battle analysis of defeat and victory. In fact, of the military incidents on which he focuses, all but one are certainly minor operations to the military historian, and even the British surrender and withdrawal from Crete might not be considered of major importance. Looking at the structure in terms of military operations, we can divide the three volumes as originally published as follows: (1) Men at Arms presents the organization and training of British arms leading up the abortive raid at Dakar; (2) Officers and Gentlemen presents regrouping of forces leading to the

frustrating defeat and withdrawal of British arms from Crete; (3) Unconditional Surrender presents the withdrawal of British arms from the final phases of the war and a surrender to the political manipulations of the Communist Party in Yugoslavia. This does not present a very satisfying whole; therefore, we must look elsewhere for a satisfactory principle of structure, one which will account for the development of Guy Crouchback.

As has already been suggested, we might find this principle in the progress of Guy Crouchback's disillusionment and the growth of his grasp of reality, but we must be careful to recognize the contrasts and complements afforded by the actions of other characters and the developments in the international scene. Viewed from Guy's progress, each volume presents a stage in his development, giving us a three part structure: (1) the illusion of glamor--both the dashing, romantic figure of "boudoir" fiction, and the noble, altruistic hero of boy's adventure fiction--is dispelled while Guy learns something of his abilities and limitations; (2) the illusion of the effectiveness of British valor and the invincibility of a valorous class--valorous either by birth or by training--is dispelled, and Guy is forced to reappraise the quality of his faith; (3) the illusion of justice to be brought about by an Allied victory is dispelled; the whole war is seen to be insane; and while Guy is forced to acknowledge his guilty complicity and the final illusion of personal ineffectiveness, he is at last able to fully accept his real limitations and affirm his real faith.

When we look at how the major parts of each of the original three volumes are put together to see if we can enlarge our understanding and render more acceptable this concept of the whole work's structure, we find the plot developed by a series of "reversals" usually comic and "recognitions" especially

those Guy experienced.

What was Men at Arms is divided into four major parts, a prologue and three books respectively entitled "Sword of Honour," "Apthorpe Gloriosus," "Apthorpe Furibundus," and "Apthorpe Immolatus." The Apthorpe titles are mock-heroic--a device Waugh first used in Captain Grimes's final disappearance from Decline and Fall--which suggests that the prologue's title, which Waugh chose as a title for the whole work, might be also heavily ironic.

When Guy experiences difficulty in getting into the war, he has his first recognition of the irrational nature of war. When he is told by the Services that they do not want to repeat the mistake of 1914, throwing away "the pick of the nation," Guy replies: "I'm natural fodder. I've no special skill in anything. What's more I'm getting old. I'm ready for immediate consumption. You should take the thirty-fives now and give the young men time to get sons." But, despite the disclaimer, the official view is to take the young men like Guy's nephew, Tony Box-Bender. The first reversal occurs when, after all Guy's efforts to contact important people in London fail, he visits his father at a sea-side resort and through him meets Major Tickeridge of the Halberdiers, who tells Guy he can get him into the Corps as a temporary officer in the new brigade that is going to be formed. Guy's personal recognition is that he is unable to respond spontaneously to comradeship: "Why couldn't I say 'Here's how' to Major Tickeridge? My father did. Gervase would have. Why couldn't I?"<sup>23</sup> This is Guy's first step on his spiritual pilgrimage.

"Apthorpe Gloriosus" introduces a character who has been made much of as a comic creation."<sup>24</sup> When Guy joins the Halberdiers, Apthorpe is the only other fellow officer-candidate who is about Guy's age. In this and other Waugh novels, critics have been fascinated by similarities among characters and have ignored

the author's admonition to look for the individuating features. Certainly Waugh is at pains to indicate a number of similarities between Guy and Apthorpe, their age, their knee injuries, Brigadier Ritchie-Hook's confusing their identities, etc.; but Frederick Stopp exaggerates when he says that Book I presents "a domination of Crouchback by his double." Also Stopp's judgment of Apthorpe that "the feet of clay are, of course, not immediately obvious,"<sup>25</sup> is not quite accurate. When Guy first encounters him, Apthorpe's discourse on his "porpoise" boots arouses suspicions as to the clay feet within them. These suspicions are somewhat confirmed when we are told immediately that "the only criticism ever made of his turn-out on parade was that his boots were dull."<sup>26</sup> Nor is the persona Guy creates for himself at this time dictated, or even chiefly influenced, by Apthorpe; the curled moustache and the monocle belong to a more dashing, gay-dog type than Apthorpe--a type out of cheap "boudoir" fiction or the movies. It is a type, however, that suits Apthorpe's view of Guy, a view largely determined by Guy's comparative affluence.

A more accurate view of "Apthorpe Gloriosus," is not the identity of Guy and Apthorpe but a balancing of similarities, more or less exact, and the marked differences of which Guy is aware. Under the sway of the glamorous tradition of the Halberdiers, Guy certainly glorifies his role as soldier. The Halberdier spirit appears to Guy to be embodied in the "guest night," concluding the first stage of his training--an affair that smacks of the best of undergraduate high spirits. In a somewhat tipsy impromptu football match with a wastebasket Guy injures his knee. "Those days of lameness, he realized much later, were his honeymoon, the full consummation of his love of the Royal Corps of Halberdiers."<sup>27</sup> The fiasco with his ex-wife finally forces Guy into recognizing that the soldierly glory and glamor are false.



Under the expansiveness created by the aura of glamor, Guy enjoys London for the first time in his life. At an intimate review<sup>28</sup> he meets young Frank de Souza, one of his fellow Halberdiers, and Frank's girl friend. Guy is friendlier than we have yet seen him. In a brief conversation made painful by the snubbing remarks of the girl, Guy is told that Frank has been living with the girl during his leave in her London flat. It is not too surprising, considering the moustache and the monocle, then, that Guy should seek an amatory finishing touch to his image as the dashing soldier of romance. After hearing a story about a distant kinsman from Ambrose Goodall (as the "humour" name suggests, a somewhat ridiculously pious convert to Catholicism) in which Guy learns that theologically it is not a sin for a husband to resume sexual relations with his former wife, Guy makes straight for London and Virginia.

The climactic scene, in which Guy's expectations suffer such a disastrous reversal, occurs on St. Valentine's Day. From Virginia's natural human point of view Guy's legalistic theology is "smug, obscene, pompous," and "sexless."<sup>29</sup> Frederick Stopp points out, with considerable insight, that "perhaps the failure happened because the lover set out as a 'killer'."<sup>30</sup> He sees Apthorpe's telephone calls, which shatter the amorous mood, as parodying and paralleling Guy's behavior. Particularly, the final call, in which Apthorpe says he has put a civilian under close arrest, parallels Guy's attempt to put Virginia under bodily restraint. However, one should not be too hasty to conclude, as Stopp does, that King's Regulations cannot solve the problem of the relationship of Guy and Virginia--not if we consider (since we are dealing with figurative meanings) another King's (Christ's) set of regulations.

The comic use of the telephone in this scene is an old Waugh tool, honed here to razor sharpness. The telephone perverts, rather than insures, com-

munication in Waugh's novels. When used between the sexes it most generally frustrates the amorous plans of the male. In Vile Bodies the numerous calls between Adam and Nina inevitably conclude with either Adam telling Nina he cannot marry her after all, or Nina telling Adam that she cannot see him because she has a pain. It is the telephone that brings out the Prufrock in Mr. Outrage, preventing him from bringing "matters to a crisis" with Baroness Yoshewara.<sup>31</sup> In A Handful of Dust the telephone prevents Tony Last from seeing his wife Brenda in her London flat. Here insult is added to frustration since John Beaver, Brenda's caddish lover, a man whose telephone is his prize possession, is present when Tony calls. Brenda directs him to use the telephone in order to keep her husband away.<sup>32</sup> The telephone, in Waugh's fiction, is symbolic of the depersonalization of the Modern Age.

"Apthorpe Gloriosus" sets up a number of future reversals: "As surely as Apthorpe was marked for early promotion, Trimmer was marked for ignominy"; "Apthorpe looked like any experienced soldier, but Leonard seemed made of the very stuff that constituted the Corps"; but above all, Ambrose Goodall's story of a Catholic nobleman who resumes sexual relations with his ex-wife, from which its teller concludes: "Explain it how you will, I see the workings of Providence there."<sup>33</sup>

"Apthorpe Furibundus," with its wildly comic central scenes of Apthorpe's struggle with Brigadier Ben Ritchie-Hook for possession of the Thunder-box, propels Guy, shaken from his disastrous evening with Virginia, back onto a complete reliance on the army for his raison d'etre. One need not conclude, however, as Stopp does,<sup>34</sup> that the affair of the Thunder-box represents a transference of Guy's allegiance from Apthorpe to Ritchie-Hook. Guy's only

real bond with Apthorpe was the fantasy and fun Apthorpe could provide him. Ritchie-Hook, on the other hand, had always appealed to what one critic has called Guy's "Schoolboy romanticism."<sup>35</sup> What is represented is a change in role from the soldier as "killer-lover" to the purer, altruistic hero of boy's adventure fiction. There is a boyish atmosphere, at times rather macabre, which Thomas Churchill has aptly labeled "schoolboy gothic"<sup>36</sup> hanging over this section.

An important aspect of the novel's final effect is presented in comic miniature in this chapter. It involves a very funny turn of the tables. After the initial skirmishing over the Thunder-box, Apthorpe passes Guy the note: "The notice has been taken down from the hut. Unconditional surrender?" But following the last act of this little drama, after the Brigadier had booby-trapped the Thunder-box, Apthorpe's one dazed comment is, "Biffed."<sup>37</sup> An "unconditional surrender" is not necessarily what it first appears to be.

Reversals of expectations also occur in the public military world. Though the Halberdiers had trained expecting action, they are told that the temporary troops, such as Guy, are to be disbanded; finally, they are re-assembled awaiting embarkation.

A passage deleted from the recension discloses Guy's inner condition at this time as a muddled blend of the notions of Romance and the principles of morals:

There was in Romance great virtue in unequal odds. There were in morals two requisites for a lawful war, a just cause and the chance of victory . . . And just before he fell asleep, came a personal comforting thought. However inconvenient it was for the Scandinavians to have Germans there, it was very nice for the Halberdiers. . . . Now a whole new coastline was open for biffing.<sup>38</sup>

Guy has also been guilty of shifting responsibility properly his own. Guy

recommends the Trimmer-like Sergeant Soames for officers' training. Major Erskine, who had done much the same thing, comments: "Jolly sort of army we're going to have in two years' time when all the shits have got to the top."<sup>39</sup> The war's final stages prove that the Major had made a prophetic statement.

Despite this particular moral confusion, Guy has been learning. There has been a counterstatement running through both sections, but its notes have been muted, sounded below the blaring martial theme. He learns something of comradeship in denying himself the comfort of a private room. His attack on Trimmer shows him how easily his soldierly ideal tarnishes. He recognizes that his esteem among his fellow junior officers rests largely on his financial position, and strangely enough, his not being promoted seems to make him more simpatico with them. In the prevailing chaos of a "flap," Guy is "awed" by the "huge patience" of the troops. And there is at least one moment, at the fall of Finland, when Guy confronts the real: "For Guy the news quickened the sickening suspicion he had tried to ignore, had succeeded in ignoring more often than not in his service in the Halberdiers; that he was engaged in a war in which courage and a just cause were quite irrelevant to the issue."<sup>40</sup>

Though Waugh must establish the solidity and importance of his main character in this first portion of Sword of Honour, and for this reason Guy is almost always "on-stage," Waugh does in "Apthorpe Furibundus" cut-away from him on one occasion to show the insanity of the minds operating behind the scenes. This technique, which is employed with increasing frequency as the novel progresses, is first used to show us the wonderfully garbled account of Guy's activities as they are interpreted by Grace-Groundling-Marchpole of Counter Espionage.<sup>41</sup>

"Apthorpe Immolatus" presents three important matters covered by three

reversals, the last two of which are grimly ironic. The first seriously introduces the problem of surrender. Guy's father writes Guy two letters. In the first he says: "Angela had made up her mind he (Tony Box-Bender) is a prisoner but I think you and I know him and his regiment too well to think of them as giving themselves up. . . . It is the bona mors for which we pray." In the second letter, after it has been confirmed that Tony was taken prisoner, he says: "It is God's will for the boy but I cannot rejoice . . . It was not the fault of the garrison that they surrendered. They were ordered to do so from higher up."<sup>42</sup>

In the second matter Guy rejects the picture of himself as "Truslove," the hero of Kiplingesque boys' adventure tales. It is difficult to account for "Truslove's" being left out of the recension. The reference, not tediously repeated, attests in a particularly vivid way to the strain of romanticism beneath his detached, aristocratic exterior.

The abortive raid on Dakar dispelled the "Truslove" image. The raid, in which Guy casts himself in the hero's role, is, in fact, intended by Ritchie-Hook to be a personal escapade for himself. Ritchie-Hook's incognito participation in the mission and his consequent foul-up result in Guy's coming under a cloud of official sanction. The (now) Colonel Tickeridge, a simple chivalric soldier, would prefer to have Guy decorated, but he realizes: "You're in the clear legally. But it'll be a black mark. For the rest of your life when your name comes up, someone is bound to say: 'Isn't he the chap who blotted his copy-book at Dakar in '40?'"<sup>43</sup> Just such a clouded situation is the usual starting point of a "Truslove" adventure, but Guy relinquishes the role. The sole military achievement of the Dakar raid was Ritchie-Hook's unnecessary decapitating of a Negro colonial soldier, a grizzly parody of the

splendid deeds of Captain "Truslove." Although he renounces the picture of himself as "Truslove" from this point on, Guy has not yet achieved, though the reader certainly has, a proper recognition of the action's totally farcical value.

To understand why this is so, a look at the character of Ritchie-Hook and its effect on Guy is necessary. The name, his maimed hand, one eye, and delight in collecting heads make him reminiscent of the comically villainous Captain Hook of Peter Pan. Lest we too hurriedly write the Brigadier off as a creature of pure fantasy unable to make an impression in a world of any reality, Stephen Marcus has "identified" the "original" as Lieut. Col. Alfred Daniel Wintle. Marcus writes: "As in the case with Dickens's novels, when the original of a character who seems unlikely or outrageous can be discovered, one is always struck by the strict realism of the comic artist's observation--sometimes even by his understatement."<sup>44</sup> Ritchie-Hook's destructiveness is mitigated for Guy by the fact that "surprise," not destruction, is his real end.<sup>45</sup> Perhaps this is not something everyone can understand, but most men or boys who have lived in a boarding school or college are familiar with this generally well-liked type. Indeed there is something schoolboyish about all of Ritchie-Hook's actions. More importantly, Guy believes at this point that he is engaged in a war against the forces of evil, and Ritchie-Hook is the one man who has demonstrated to Guy an unqualified desire to "biff" those forces--for this, Guy is willing to overlook a great deal.

The third matter is the death of Apthorpe. Msgr. Ronald Knox has observed: "Apthorpe's last moments are invested with an almost intolerable pathos by the discovery that his aunt at Peterborough was only an invention. . . . Yet

somehow the unreality of his pedigree makes Apthorpe more real to us than ever."<sup>46</sup> The great irony is that the whiskey which Guy brings on the advice of the Brigade Major to cheer Apthorpe is the cause of his death. There is an additional reversal of commonly held opinion in the doctor's words: "Apthorpe's got the disadvantage of having lived in this God-forsaken country. You chaps who come out fresh from England have got stamina."<sup>47</sup>

Apthorpe is buried on the same day that Guy, under a cloud for his part in both the Dakar affair and Apthorpe's death, returns to England. Guy no longer has any illusions about a glamorous role, but he has learned that he is not completely worthless; he can keep his head while commanding in a tight situation. The first stage of his pilgrimage is completed.

Nigel Dennis' already quoted praise of the showman's skills in Waugh's early novels applies to the rest of *Sword of Honour* beginning with the chapter entitled "Happy Warriors": We marvel at his dexterity "when, five characters in each hand, he can develop, in smoothly interlocking conversations and exits and entries, the reader's understanding of his people, their immediate situation, and the theme of the novel."<sup>48</sup> Having firmly established Guy's character during the first stage of his pilgrimage, Waugh is free to cut-away from him to develop through the actions of other characters the "big picture" side of his story. This process of development rests partially on the successful introduction of various new characters into the tale. In "Happy Warriors" two new characters of some significance, Jumbo Trotter and Ivor Claire, are introduced. Jumbo Trotter, a retired Colonel in the Halberdiers, is a representative of the best of the "old order" whose dominant characteristic is imperturbability mingled with an elephantine practical sagacity. Jumbo allows Waugh to get off one of

the wild little "one-liners," so easily overlooked, that have made him such a delight to read from Decline and Fall on: "But Jumbo did not forget." Ivor Claire's role is a more serious one; for Guy he becomes "the fine flower of them all. He was quintessential England, the man Hitler had not taken into account."<sup>49</sup> Concerning Claire, Richard Voorhees has observed: "His surname, in French, means bright, light, pure, and the activity in which he excels (horsemanship) is the origin, through French, of the very word chivalry."<sup>50</sup>

The advance of the action as it concerns Guy may be summarized briefly. Guy sets "out on the second stage of his pilgrimage which had begun at the tomb of Sir Roger. Now, as then, an act of pietas was required of him; a spirit was to be placated. Apthorpe's gear must be retrieved and delivered before Guy was free "to follow his fortunes in the King's service."<sup>51</sup> Jumbo Trotter is the messenger who recalls Guy to the war. Together they arrive at the Isle of Mugg to join a commando led by Tommy Blackhouse, Virginia's second husband, the man for whom she left Guy. On the Isle of Mugg Guy finds Apthorpe's heir, the ape-like "Chatty" Corner, and so is able to lay the ghost of Apthorpe to rest. At the section's close Tommy's commando has been made a part of Hook-force, and Guy is once again serving under his old Brigadier, Ben Ritchie-Hook, who, through an unlooked for directive from the Prime Minister, had been returned to duty.

In the "world picture" we discover that the war is being run with monumental confusion. An officer who had spent his life in mountain soldiering is demoted, and "Chatty" Corner, who had never been out of the jungle, is put in charge of teaching Tommy's commando the art of mountain warfare. Dr. Glendening-Rees, a crack-pot "expert" on dietetics, who is supposed to teach the



troops to survive on food found on the battlefield, is unable to keep himself on his feet. The crazy niece of the Laird of Mugg, obsessed with Scotch nationalism, distributes Nazi pamphlets, while her uncle plots to steal the sappers' stores of explosives to blast a bathing beach out of the isles rocky cliffs. Trimmer, who turns up in a Scotch regiment as Lieut. McTavish, is in command of a coastal defense battery whose only gun has been jammed for months. The Communist Party is said to have placed all its unattached members in H.O.O.H.Q., an office that later comes to have considerable importance.

In the recension we can note a deepening seriousness and grimness in Waugh's humor. While he deleted the "Truslove" passages which smacked of boyish fantasy, he added a sentence to what had been the end of Book I of Officers and Gentlemen: "The great explosion which killed Mugg and his niece was attributed to enemy action."<sup>52</sup> This could be a change indicative of the spirit in which all the changes were made, and in terms of the corpus of Waugh's whole work it may be a significant change. The Laird of Mugg is a variant of a type of character that had previously been successful in Waugh's work in defeating the Modern Age. Aged, hard of hearing, living in a world of his own making, a world of the past, he is cut from the same pattern as Colonel Blount of Vile Bodies, Uncle Theodore of Scoop, and Charles Ryder's father in Brideshead, all three of whom were eminently successful in getting what they wanted out of life. In the original version of Officers and Gentlemen we assume, in the absence of further information, that the Laird would have had some sort of upside-down success with his explosives plot. But for all its humorous devices Sword of Honour is a closer representation of the real world than the early novels, and the Modern Age cannot be overcome by fantasy.

Two sets of seemingly unconnected incidents in this chapter, which at

first appear to be merely contrasting background music to the theme of the main action, are finally seen, in terms of the whole work, to be of major significance to the overriding theme. They offer an example of the subtlety with which Waugh weaves his plot. The first is concerned with Guy's father, who, in the shortage of teachers, has taken a form for a Catholic boys' school quartered near the seaside resort hotel in which he has been staying. The new owners of the hotel want to profiteer on the temporary shortage of rooms and connive with the local billeting officer to deprive Mr. Crouchback of his sitting room. Their hopes are thwarted when Jumbo Trotter talks to the billeting officer, who happens to be an old Halberdier sergeant. At this point Mr. Crouchback realizes that someone may be in need of the room, so he voluntarily surrenders it. The grasping hotel keepers are unable to understand the spirit of charity which motivates Mr. Crouchback's action.

The second matter concerns Trimmer and Virginia. They meet in Glasgow, which is covered by a "Dickensian fog"; and we discover that Trimmer, now McTavish, had "done" Virginia's hair in pre-war days on the Aquatania; his name then was Gustave. Sentimentally moved by this remembrance of her days of now faded glory, Virginia allows herself to engage in a brief affair with Trimmer. The brevity and the Dickensian plot element was accentuated by Trimmer's encountering a major from his regiment. Trimmer had been posing as a major himself to facilitate his sexual conquest. Now his pose backfires, and he is forced to invent a story of having been promoted and posted to Tommy's Commando. He little realizes that this is the first step on the road to fame and glory. Nor can Virginia have the faintest inkling that the Hand of God has begun to draw her life straight with some very crooked lines.

There is a brief "interlude"<sup>54</sup> while Hookforce is in Cape Town. Guy and

Ivor Claire term Cape Town an Ali Baba's lamp which seems to give everyone what he desires. For Guy this is wine and art; for Ivor it is horses and isolation; for Tommy Blackhouse it is command of Hookforce, a plane carrying Ritchie-Hook having disappeared. Corporal-Major Ludovic, a character who will assume considerable importance in the final stage of Guy's pilgrimage, is first mentioned by name as possibly being a communist. Here we discover Guy's previously quoted illusion about Ivor Claire and the valorous class. The irony of Guy's judgment, as will be borne out by events in the last half of "Officers and Gentlemen," is enriched by remarks about X Commando made at the end of "Happy Warriors" by Ian Kilbannock, a titled acquaintance of Guy's who had been a sporting journalist before the war. Ian had said: "You're the 'Fine Flower of the Nation.' You can't deny it and it won't do. . . . The upper classes are on the secret list. We want heroes of the People, to or for the people, by, with and from the People."<sup>55</sup>

A characteristic which has been suggested all along, but which emerges most strongly from "In the Picture" as the second book of Officers and Gentlemen originally was entitled, is the ambiguous nature of experience: ignominious fools are turned into heroes; gallant comrades become deserters; priests may be spies; and beautiful ladies are deceitful intriguers. The original title is worth recalling, since it carries suggestions which help to illuminate the action. A "picture" suggests, among other things, composition, arrangement, and interpretation. The final effect of a picture is largely determined by whoever does the composing, arranging and interpreting—a situation consonant with the ambiguity of experience portrayed in this portion of the novel. A certain detachment of distancing is also suggested by the word "picture"—not the

intimacy of life itself. Guy must achieve a detachment which will allow him to remain in the world, function there, but not be of it. A sense of detachment also enables the reader to appreciate more fully how little the Officers and the Gentlemen are able to control the forces which affect their lives.

"In the Picture" becomes part of the chapter "Officers and Gentlemen" in the recension. Two military operations dominate the action in this chapter. The first is the farcical "Operation Popgun" from which Trimmer emerges a national hero. He actually behaves with complete cowardice on the mission, but Ian Kilbannock uses the power of the press to effectively pervert the truth. Ian satisfies the public's demand for heroes, secures his soft job, and, unknowingly, gives an ironic twist to Guy's earlier prediction of Trimmer's fate.

Despite the farcical nature of the incident, it leads the reader to sympathize to a degree with Trimmer. In a sense it is not unlike the sympathy aroused for Cedric Lyne in *Put Out More Flags*, though the situations are reversed. Cedric is perhaps too good in a romantically noble, other-worldly way for his wife, Angela, and we are somewhat moved by his death. Yet all the time we sympathize with him, we realize that he and Angela could never get along with each other. Trimmer, on the other hand, is not good enough for Virginia. It seems preposterous to accuse Waugh of snobbery in the portrayal of the relationship between Virginia and Trimmer.<sup>56</sup> It is not a class difference which prevents any long-term relationship between them; it is Trimmer's basic dishonesty and affectation. Virginia is nothing if she is not honest and straightforward. Thomas Churchill has called Trimmer "Waugh's worst cad since John Beaver."<sup>57</sup> His remark to Virginia: "How about a Dutch treat as we're both in the same boat"<sup>58</sup> at the moment he is about to launch his most audacious grasp for a

conquest which had been so far beyond him, is truly "worthy" of his predecessor in A Handful of Dust. But his conduct immediately before "Operation Popgun" is not at all Beaverish. He really cares, despite his gross sentimentality, about Virginia. In the submarine he writes her a long gushy letter which reads like third-rate romance, but "that infinitesimal particle of wisdom that lay in Trimmer's depths, asserted itself. It just would not do, not for Virginia. He folded it small, tore it across and let the pieces fall to the steel deck."<sup>59</sup>

The far more significant military action concerns the last stages of the battle of Crete. During the chaos of British retreat, Ludovic, who has been keeping a book of Pensee's, notes: "Captain Crouchback is pleased because General Militiades is a gentleman. He would like to believe that the war is being fought by such people. But all gentlemen are now very old."<sup>60</sup> Waugh had made a practice of putting perceptive, very important comments, containing at least a portion, but not all, of the truth, into the mouths of odd, disreputable characters. Frequently these characters are homosexuals: Ambrose Silk in Put Out More Flags, Anthony Blanche in Brideshead Revisited, and now Ludovic.

It is indeed difficult to discover any reason for removing General Militiades and consequently Ludovic's comment about Guy's attitude from the recension. There is nothing obvious about Ludovic's remark, for in the light of the whole work, the remark is only partially true--Guy himself is not "very old." In addition to increasing the ambiguity in the novel, Ludovic's remark performs a number of other functions. It supplies a judgment on the times by a detached and intelligent observer, and it also makes more convincing the judgment we are forming about Guy by giving us another recording consciousness to act as a check to our own observations.

The truth in Ludovic's observation is born out by the behavior of Major "Fido" Hound and Ivor Claire. Major Hound is a professional soldier, a member of the supposedly valorous class by choice and training. In his first serious temptation he is betrayed by his animality, a craving for food, and from then on he behaves in a thoroughly houndish way. The fall of Major Hound is a scene handled with cool detachment and masterful concision that carries mock-heroic echoes of Judas Iscariot:

The deal was done. Fido took his price of shame in his hand, the little lump of the flaky, fatty meat and his single biscuit. He did not look at Guy, but went away out of sight to eat. It took a bare minute. Then he returned to the centre of his groups and sat silent with his map and his lost soul.<sup>61</sup>

Guy is much more disturbed by what he deems Ivor Claire's betrayal of honor. The matter is a very complex one; Claire himself recognizes the complexity, which is based on the shifting concept of honor in a fluctuating, largely relativistic world. This incident, perhaps more than any other, reveals the ambiguous character of contemporary experience. Inevitably, Falstaff's famous speech on "honor" comes to mind: honor's possessor "died o'Wednesday." We also might recall the debate that has raged over the character of Falstaff since Morgan's eighteenth-century essay. Lest we accept Guy's valuation of Ivor's action too readily, we should remember that Guy's father, the just man, held no brief for surrender. Is there a right action in the circumstances; could Ivor be on the side of the angels?

Whatever the real answer is, Ivor's action destroys Guy's illusions of the valor of the blood aristocracy. Guy's disillusionment is heightened by the actions of Julia Stitch, whose sense of personal or class loyalty impels her to have Guy shanghied back to England when she mistakenly believes that he is going

to expose Ivor's desertion. When Julia first appears to whisk Guy to a dinner where the Commander-in-Chief quotes poetry, and then when she later brings Guy out of his self-imposed silence, it appears she is merely resuming the role of beneficent minor deity she played in Scoop. This world, however, is closer to reality than the world of Scoop; Julia assumes the ambiguity of Shakespeare's Cleopatra.

Guy's greatest disillusionment, in the light of which Ivor Claire's action becomes insignificant, is Germany's invasion of Russia. Right and wrong, justice and injustice, the Faith and its enemies, become horribly, inextricably confused. The afternoon that the news reaches Guy, he burns the notebook that could incriminate Ivor Claire: "It was a symbolic act; he stood like the man at Spakia who dismembered his Bren and threw its parts one by one out into the harbour, splash, splash, splash, into the scum."<sup>62</sup>

To redeem the picture from unrelieved gloom there has been the gallant conduct of the Halberdiers. It appears that this background action to the glaring infidelities on the main stage has frequently been overlooked, especially by critics who are determined to convict Waugh of outrageous snobbery. Mr. Bergonzi's judgment must be somewhat qualified, the satire on military life is not completely thorough-going. Two men from the "lower orders," Halberdier Shanks and Lieut. Sarum-Smith, achieve in Crete a measure of heroism and manhood respectively. When the Brigade was about to embark to repel singlehandedly a rumored German invasion of Ireland, Shanks had asked Guy for leave, so he might enter a "slow valse"<sup>63</sup> competition; and Sarum-Smith had the potential of becoming a second Trimmer. Needless to say, Colonel Tickeridge behaves with unshakeable bravery and grace under pressure.

In the face of world chaos all Guy can desire is to return to personal honor and the stability and order of the Halberdiers. The machinations of Julia Stitch prevent him from so doing, and in this the reader might see, as Ambrose Goodall had in another matter, the workings of Providence. Perhaps Julia, despite herself, is still a beneficent under-deity after all.

A final point to be noted in the action of "Officers and Gentlemen" is that Guy has had a shocking revelation as to the real quality, at this time, of his religious faith. In his moment of extremity in the open boat in which he escapes from Crete, "There was one clear moment of revelation between great voids when Guy discovered himself holding in his hand, not, as he supposed, Gervase's medal, but the red identity disc of an unknown soldier, and heard himself saying preposterously: "Saint Roger of Waybroke defend us in the day of battle and be our safeguard against the wickedness and snares of the devil. . . ."64

In contrast to his own sham religious experience, when Guy returns to England, he reads a second letter from Tony Box-Bender, who has been a prisoner of war since the British surrender of Calais. In an earlier card Tony requested cigarettes, food, "woolly slippers" and a hair tonic; but now he asks for a number of books on the spiritual life. It prompts his father, a non-religious man, to think his son is suffering from "religious mania."65

Arthur Box-Bender, Guy's drab, somewhat penurious brother-in-law, despite his lack of color, performs an important function. A member of Parliament, presumably a university product, and a member of Bellamy's, he is nevertheless solidly middle class non-Catholic. Aside from his penchant for small domestic economies, he is decent enough in a stolid Victorian--one is tempted to say



Dickensian--way. He is a somewhat older and more tired version of Freddie Sot-hill of Put Out More Flags with certain affinities to the hard-pressed Mr. Salter of Scoop, who longed for "punctual domestic dinners" and "Sunday at home."<sup>66</sup> Though one would hardly wish to "identify" with Box-Bender, his opinions on most subjects would be fairly common ones. His fear that his son is suffering from "religious mania" because he wants books on the spiritual life, seems fairly common judgment of the non-religious understanding. Waugh is clearly out of sympathy with such an understanding (or lack of it); yet his satire here is mild rather than harsh.

Since the time setting of the final stage of Guy's pilgrimage is the last phase of the war in Europe, after the tide of military victory had turned in favor of the Allied Forces, it presents the picture of the world situation as it will emerge from the war. Correspondingly, there is a greater diversity in focus, with the action increasingly cutting-away from Guy. This presents a problem in structure which is not answered in a completely satisfactory way.

Waugh himself stated in a review of Anthony Powell's Casanova's Chinese Restaurant: "All long works of literature have their periods of apparent stagnation."<sup>67</sup>

If this is true of Sword of Honour, it seems that, in terms of the structural unity of the plot, the slack occurs in those portions of Chapters Eight through Ten dealing with the literary career of Ludovic and the development of the English novel. In themselves these sections are stimulating, often bitingly funny, but it is difficult to see their connection with what has gone before. We had previously been made aware of Guy's interest in art, particularly painting, and the familiarity with poetry that exists in Julia Stitch's circle; but it is doubtful if these bits are sufficient preparation for the sharply

pointed and detailed commentary we get in these later chapters. It does seem that the author is intruding unduly here.

The one place where literature becomes part of the very warp and woof of the plot is in Everard Spruce's judgment of Virginia as belonging with Huxley's Mrs. Vieveash and Hemingway's Brett Ashley, the last of such a line of "--the exquisite, the doomed and the damning, with expiring voices."<sup>68</sup> It is perhaps a tribute to the dexterity of Mr. Waugh's handling that at least one critic<sup>69</sup> should have considered so tremendous an irony as acceptable analysis. Of the four qualities enumerated by Spruce, the exact opposite of the last three mentioned expressed the truth as Waugh would have us see it. But perhaps more than any tribute to technique, such a critical acceptance points up the truth of Guy's reflection: "Had someone said: 'All differences are theological differences?'"<sup>70</sup>

Certainly more important than the precarious state of English letters is the "unconditional surrender" of the values and traditions of Western civilization (essentially Christian values and traditions) to Communism in the action ironically referred to as "liberation." The British war effort, almost from top to bottom, is infected. Perhaps the worst form of the infection is seen in the person of Sir Ralph Brompton, aging homosexual diplomat: "Liberation was Sir Ralph's special care. Wherever those lower than the Cabinet and the Chiefs of Staff adumbrated the dismemberment of Christendom, there Sir Ralph might be found."<sup>71</sup> The matter of Communist influence, its causes and effects, will be dealt with more fully in Chapter IX when we consider themes.

One event in military operations, the final effect of which is closely linked with Communism's success, is the death of Ritchie-Hook. It is a farcical affair that begins as a rigged demonstration of the partisans' effectiveness to

impress an American general, and it ends as a one-man assault on a blockhouse. The final effect dispels any doubt that the author shares anything of Guy's lingering hero-worship; Ritchie-Hook's death convinces the American general of the partisans' worth. It is as Ian Kilbannock comments: "A decision of the heart rather than of the head perhaps." Ian, one of Waugh's unattractive oracles who say a good deal more than they themselves realize, continues: "In all this war I've only twice had any part in an operation. Both have afforded classic stories of heroism. You wouldn't have thought, would you, that Trimmer and Ritchie-Hook had a great deal in common."<sup>72</sup>

The main action up till now has advanced by a series of reversals which have stripped Guy of a number of illusions, but while these happenings have frequently revealed to Guy an aspect of his character or inner life, they have been negative---the exposing of flaws. Positive realizations, courage, his comradeship, the ability to lead men, etc., have been kept in the background. In the final stage of his pilgrimage, affirmation comes to the fore. It begins with a letter to Guy from his father explaining their differences of opinion on the Lateran Treaty. The key sentences are: "Quantitative judgments don't apply. If only one soul was saved, that is full compensation for any amount of loss of 'face'." A realization of what these sentences mean and the full weight of his father's concern for his spiritual apathy, expressed in the same letter, come home to Guy a short time later at his father's funeral. Through pondering his father's life in terms of these two sentences, Guy considers his own life in comparison to the parable of the laborers in the vineyard: "One day he would get the chance to do some small service which only he could perform, for which he had been created. Even he must have his function in the divine plan. He

did not expect a heroic destiny. Quantitative judgments did not apply."<sup>73</sup>

During the scenes surrounding the funeral of Guy's father at Broome, the theme of the just man "justicing" sounds loud and clear. The counter-theme of the negation and chaos that is the world picture is heard only faintly in the background. The two themes are juxtaposed with equal force just before Guy embarks on the final military operation of his war. Guy broods "about the antithesis between the acceptance of sacrifice and the will to win. It seemed to have a personal relevance, as yet undefined, to his own condition." He re-reads his father's letter, which he now carries with him. The counter note is "There was a congress at Teheran at the time entirely occupied with quantitative judgments."<sup>74</sup>

The "personal relevance" which Guy discovers is two-fold. Virginia is with child by Trimmer, her part in the insane war effort that insists on making a hero of such a fellow. Guy agrees to take her back as his wife. His acceptance of this situation is related to us indirectly, through a conversation he has with the wife of Ian Kilbannock, whose sense of propriety, though she has been Virginia's friend and confidant, is shocked. Since the scene is the climax of the novel, it demands direct quotation:

"You poor bloody fool," said Kerstie, anger and pity and something near love in her voice, "you're being chivalrous--about Virginia. Can't you understand men aren't chivalrous any more and I don't believe they ever were. Do you really see Virginia as a damsel in distress?"

"She's in distress."

"She's tough."

"Perhaps when they are hurt, the tough suffer more than the tender."

"Oh, come off it, Guy. You're forty years old. Can't you see how ridiculous you will look playing the knight errant? Ian thinks you are insane, literally. Can you tell me any sane reason for doing this thing?"

..... -.....

"Of course Virginia is tough. She would have survived somehow. I shan't be changing her by what I'm doing. I know all that. But you see there's another---" he was going to say "soul"; then realized that this word would mean little to Kerstie for all her granite propriety---"there's another life to consider. What sort of life do you think her child would have, born unwanted in 1944?"

"It's no business of yours."

"It was made my business by being offered."<sup>75</sup>

Here is the measure of Guy's awareness; what almost five years had taught him about faith and helping the weak. But he must learn still more.

Guy learns the remainder of his lesson in Yugoslavia, where the "surrender" to Communism is all too apparent. In the original version the last book of Unconditional Surrender is entitled "The Death Wish"; in the recension the same section is entitled "The Last Battle". In it we see a variety of manifestations of the death wish. They all come together in a speech of Madame Kanyi, a Jewish refugee, whom Guy has tried to help. Walter Allen in The Modern Novel has called this speech "surely one of the most affecting passages in contemporary fiction."<sup>76</sup> The essence of the speech is: "It seems to me there was a will to war, a death wish, everywhere. Even good men thought their private honour would be satisfied by war. . . . Danger justified privilege. . . . Were there none in England?"<sup>77</sup> But this is not, as some critics suggest,<sup>78</sup> the final attainment of Guy's self-knowledge. He must yet face the most subtle and most difficult trial, the greatest test to his re-affirmed faith. He must experience in a most shattering way the limitations of the effectiveness of his compassion, of his own good will. Guy had envisioned himself a second Moses leading the Israelites out of captivity; the dream of heroism dies hard. When he returns to Bari, he discovers that his attempted kindness to Madame Kanyi has cost her and her husband their lives.

In the final chapter, a kind of epilogue set in 1951, "things have

turned out very conveniently for Guy," as Arthur Box-Bender says. Virginia had been killed by a "buzz bomb" while Guy was in Yugoslavia. Guy has married again. He and his wife are raising Trimmer's son as Gervase Crouchback, a Catholic and heir to the greatly reduced, but presently self-supporting, home farm at Broome. Box-Bender's son Tony has entered a monastery. There is an appropriateness to this conclusion to the novel which will be discussed in Chapter IX.

There is one final curious note on the structure. As he had done previously in A Handful of Dust, Waugh has supplied his readers with alternate endings. In the English Chapman and Hall edition of Unconditional Surrender and in the third printing of the American Little, Brown and Company edition of The End of the Battle, Guy and his new wife Domenica have no children of their own. In the first printing of the Little, Brown edition they have two children of their own. The choice Waugh offers is between a preference for the greater symmetry of the reversal and the toughness of the lesson with no children, and a preference for an abundance of affirmation, Job's final state being happier than his former state, with two children of his own. Since there are no children given to Guy and Domenica in the recension, the tougher lesson is apparently Waugh's final, as well as his first, thought on the matter.

FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Breit, The Writer Observed, p. 45.

<sup>2</sup>All page references, unless otherwise specified, will be from Sword of Honour (London: Chapman & Hall, 1965), hereafter referred to as SH.

<sup>3</sup>SH, p. 9.

<sup>4</sup>"The Beauty of His Malice, Evelyn Waugh (1903-1966)," Time, LXXXVII (April 22, 1966), 84.

<sup>5</sup>Knox, "The Reader Suspended," 238.

<sup>6</sup>Stopp, Evelyn Waugh: Portrait of an Artist, p. 205.

<sup>7</sup>Carens, The Satiric Art of Evelyn Waugh, p. vii; Churchill, "The House of Evelyn Waugh," p. 147.

<sup>8</sup>Kingsley Amis, "Crouchback's Regress," Spectator, CCVII (October 27, 1961), 581-82.

<sup>9</sup>Bergonzi, "Evelyn Waugh's Gentlemen," 32, 35.

<sup>10</sup>This is implied in the last statement quoted from Bernard Bergonzi. The identification is more explicit in Richard J. Vorhees, "Evelyn Waugh's War Novels," Queen's Quarterly, LXV (Spring, 1958), 57-59.

<sup>11</sup>SH, p. 9.

<sup>12</sup>SH, p. 15.

<sup>13</sup>Evelyn Waugh, "Half in Love with Easeful Death," Tablet, CXC (October 18, 1947), 247.

<sup>14</sup>SH, p. 29.

<sup>15</sup>Stopp, Evelyn Waugh: Portrait of an Artist, pp. 166-67.

<sup>16</sup>SH, p. 20.

<sup>17</sup>SH, pp. 38, 39.

<sup>18</sup>SH, pp. 39, 48.

<sup>19</sup>PMF, p. 209.

<sup>20</sup>Carens, The Satiric Art of Evelyn Waugh, p. 158.

<sup>21</sup>SH, pp. 169, 265.

<sup>22</sup>SH, pp. 517, 410-11.

<sup>23</sup>SH, pp. 28, 48.

<sup>24</sup>Churchill, "The House of Evelyn Waugh," p. 154; Knox, "The Reader Suspended," 237-38.

<sup>25</sup>Stopp, Evelyn Waugh: Portrait of an Artist, pp. 162, 161.

<sup>26</sup>SH, p. 51.

<sup>27</sup>SH, p. 89.

<sup>28</sup>SH, p. 90.

<sup>29</sup>SH, p. 149.

<sup>30</sup>Stopp, "Evelyn Waugh: Portrait of an Artist," p. 162.

<sup>31</sup>VB, pp. 32, 56, 118; 155-56, 168, 43-44.

<sup>32</sup>HD, pp. 69-70.

<sup>33</sup>SH, pp. 52, 71, 135.

<sup>34</sup>Stopp, Evelyn Waugh: Portrait of an Artist, p. 163.

<sup>35</sup>Churchill, "The House of Evelyn Waugh," p. 134.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

<sup>37</sup>SH, pp. 168, 174.

<sup>38</sup>Evelyn Waugh, Men at Arms (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1952), pp. 239-40. Hereafter this text will be referred to as MA.

<sup>39</sup>SH, p. 189.

<sup>40</sup>SH, pp. 108, 156.

<sup>41</sup>SH, pp. 176-77.

<sup>42</sup>SH, pp. 220-21, 221.



<sup>43</sup>SH, p. 247.

<sup>44</sup>Marcus, "Evelyn Waugh and the Art of Entertainment," 354.

<sup>45</sup>SH, pp. 131-32.

<sup>46</sup>Knox, "The Reader Suspended," 237-38.

<sup>47</sup>SH, p. 299.

<sup>48</sup>Dennis, "Evelyn Waugh: The Pillar of Anchorage House," 350-51.

<sup>49</sup>SH, pp. 299-386.

<sup>50</sup>Vorhees, "Evelyn Waugh's War Novels," 57.

<sup>51</sup>SH, p. 279.

<sup>52</sup>SH, p. 380.

<sup>53</sup>SH, p. 348.

<sup>54</sup>So it was entitled in Officers and Gentlemen. In SH it is the concluding section of "Happy Warriors."

<sup>55</sup>SH, 375.

<sup>56</sup>See Vorhees, "Evelyn Waugh's War Novels," 54-55, for such a charge.

<sup>57</sup>Churchill, "The House of Evelyn Waugh," p. 144.

<sup>58</sup>SH, p. 346.

<sup>59</sup>SH, p. 420.

<sup>60</sup>Evelyn Waugh, Officers and Gentlemen (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1955), p. 253. Hereafter this text will be referred to as OG.

<sup>61</sup>SH, p. 459.

<sup>62</sup>SH, p. 537.

<sup>63</sup>SH, p. 223.

<sup>64</sup>SH, p. 517.

<sup>65</sup>SH, pp. 286, 539.

<sup>66</sup>Scoop, p. 319.

<sup>67</sup>Evelyn Waugh, "Marriage a la Mode--1936," Spectator, CCIV (June 24, 1960), 919.

<sup>68</sup>SH, p. 752.

<sup>69</sup>Churchill, "The House of Evelyn Waugh," pp. 167-68.

<sup>70</sup>SH, p. 699.

<sup>71</sup>SH, p. 688.

<sup>72</sup>SH, p. 778.

<sup>73</sup>SH, pp. 546-47.

<sup>74</sup>SH, p. 672.

<sup>75</sup>SH, pp. 698-99.

<sup>76</sup>Walter Allen, The Modern Novel (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1964), p. 212.

<sup>77</sup>SH, p. 788.

<sup>78</sup>Allen, The Modern Novel, p. 213; Bergonzi, "Evelyn Waugh's Gentlemen,"

## CHAPTER IV

### SWORD OF HONOUR: THE IMAGERY

In our treatment of the structure of Sword of Honour we noted that Waugh faced the two-fold problem of presenting a world picture and a developing central character. An examination of the work's imagery will reveal that in handling this problem Waugh has entered fully and profoundly into the world of comedy. The world of comedy is vastly different from the world of entertainment, that world of the early novels. The world of comedy is the world of the concrete, the finite, the limited--a very real world and a very human world. It concerns itself with the everyday, the day-to-day, with things and events, and yet also with that which endures.<sup>1</sup>

By immersing itself in the everyday and in the sequence of events, comedy insists on being human, on living in the dust and sweat of mortality. Comedy refuses the escape into instant glory or instant non-being. In this insistence and its correlative refusal, comedy, as Dante knew so well, is the proper medium for the Christian message which proclaims the Word made flesh--that scandal to the pure intellect. The Dantean notion of comedy is also appropriately Christian "because of its 'prosperous, pleasant, and desirable' conclusion."<sup>2</sup> Such a conclusion is as far from shallow optimism as the bright, clear light of day is from the twilight of dreams. That Sword of Honour embodies such a concept of comedy has already been suggested by our look at its structure; a study of its imagery will help to confirm the suggestion.

The first general impression one gets of the work's imagery--in that broad sense of anything which presents a picture--is that much of it deals with the routine of army life. That Waugh has been able to pull this off without making the book thoroughly dull is perhaps an indication that he has been able to tap the spring of temporal human reality which is the source of comedy's appeal. His success is due, in part at least, to the complex and delicate interaction of individual and typical elements in his handling of characterization.

There are types associated with comedy--the clown, the pompous or proud man, the braggart, the fastidious man--who without a counterbalancing element of individuality produce farce or entertainment, not comedy. For example, though Falstaff is in one sense the miles gloriosus, and Sancho Panza is the crafty and loutish peasant, there is something in their individuality which transcends the typical. In the greatest of all comedies not only are the types of vicious and virtuous behavior individually embodied, but also the final comic effect is achieved only when we see how these types of behavior affect a basically decent but severely limited (wounded) individual named "Dante." Though Sword of Honour does not pretend to rival The Divine Comedy in scope, nor do any of its characters aspire to the stature of Falstaff or Sancho, there are similarities. Waugh's clowns have generally possessed enough of that indestructible concreteness, a kind of rock-bottom humanity despite the wildest of aberrations and eccentricities, to place them in a rather exclusive company of characters in the contemporary English novel.<sup>3</sup> In Guy Crouchback the fully comic is present; Guy shares with "Dante" his basic decency, his woundedness, his endurance, and his goal.

The comparison of The Divine Comedy and Sword of Honour cannot be extended too far, nor is there much paralleling of detail. Perhaps the analogy might be seen best after recognizing that Waugh, like the T. S. Eliot of The Waste Land, has always seen modern man in greatly reduced spiritual circumstances. Consequently, the scope of this action, his journey or pilgrimage--compared to Dante's--must be greatly reduced, though it be similar in its basic outline. Sword of Honour is almost entirely purgatorial. It begins spiritually close to hell, in the ante-chambers of Guy's lack of sympathy, and closes in paradise glimpsed in the acceptance of task and limitations; but almost all of the action is devoted to the slow, arduous ascent of the purgatorial mount. Nevertheless, since it is a story of life, not after-life, the way of purgation is the pilgrim's way, the crusader's way.

Though not the most frequently repeated image, the pattern which controls the parts of the work, marking its major advances and indicating the work's unity, can be subsumed under the heading of "crusade" images, as the title of the recension itself suggests. Included in this pattern are the related images dealing with pilgrimages, swords, sword surrogates, and other devices associated with chivalry. Structurally we have seen the work as a crusade-pilgrimage in three parts. The beginning and end of each of these major stages in Guy's pilgrimage is marked by the recurrence of crusade-pilgrimage images.

Even before the actual start of Guy's penitential and redemptive journey, we are prepared for this chivalric vision of his experience by a reference to the Holy City's (Rome) regarding the Crouchback family as "Its old companions in arms." The Russian-German alliance, which precipitates Guy into

the war, is seen as a call to battle against "The Modern Age in arms,"<sup>4</sup> described in terms suitable to the Anti-Christ. Before embarking on the first stage of his pilgrimage, Guy dedicates himself on the sword of an English crusader, Roger of Waybroke, who is interred in the Church of St. Dulcina near the Crouchback's Italian Castello.

We have already noted that Waugh frequently gives his characters names of multiple significances. Sir Roger was broken-on-the-way, never having reached the goal of the crusade, having died in a local brawl on the castle walls of a neighbor to the count of St. Dulcina. He had been given a kind of folk-canonization by the populace and become an object of their superstitious veneration. His name and his story have both parallel and contrasting meanings in relation to Guy's own story. For both men the physical combative goal of their crusade is frustrated, but for Sir Roger being broken-on-the-way accidentally leads to sanctity being attributed to him spuriously, while Guy is destroyed in St. Paul's sense, also in the sense of Don Quixote and Sancho, so that the new man might achieve personally a measure of genuine sanctity.

The Anglican parish church near the Halberdier barracks, where Guy receives his first training, reminds him of the doorway from which Roger "had stepped out on his unaccomplished journey." When Guy is fully beglamored by Halberdier splendor and pageantry on "guest night," the narrator interjects the grim reminder of chivalry's and the crusades' purpose: "It all seemed a long way off . . . from the frontier of Christendom where the great battle had been fought and lost." And in the moment of Guy's first humiliation in the Halberdiers, an important step on the pilgrimage to self-knowledge, when he threatens Trimmer with his cane, he reminds himself of his dedication: "Was

this the triumph for which Roger de Waybroke took the cross; that he should exult in putting down Trimmer?" To Guy this reflection means one thing; to the reader, especially in retrospect, it has another significance. Guy is both like and unlike Roger in this action. Again, when Guy is disappointed over the matter of promotion and experiences a sinking of spirit, another step toward self-knowledge and self-acceptance, he calls to mind "il Santo Inglese."<sup>5</sup>

There is in this first stage of Guy's pilgrimage one farcical use of images associated with chivalry. Apthorpe, who has an extended tiff with a "wet" young signals officer named Dunn (who is, by the way, "done" by Apthorpe) "penned a challenge to Dunn to meet him, armed with a heliograph, before their men, for a Trial by Combat in proficiency in Morse."<sup>6</sup>

The unifying idea of the work is recalled to our attention at the beginning of its second major part: "So Guy set out on another stage of his pilgrimage, which had begun at the tomb of Sir Roger. Now, as then, an act of pietas was required of him; a spirit was to be placated."<sup>7</sup> The spirit in this case is Apthorpe's, who, before drinking himself to death on the bottle of whiskey Guy had brought to his hospital room in Africa, had made Guy the executor of all his gear. While there is a mixture of the macabre and the touching about this situation, what is more important is the repeated notion of pilgrimage.

Another sort of pilgrimage is referred to shortly after the beginning of the second stage of Guy's journey to the sacred, Ambrose Goodall's Pilgrimage of Grace. As his humorous name suggests, there is something faintly preposterous about this kindly, mild, pious antiquarian. In collecting Apthorpe's gear, Guy visits Goodall and finds him "elated by the belief that a

great rising was imminent throughout Christian Europe; led by the priests and squires, with blessed banners, and the relics of saints borne ahead, Poles, Hungarians, Austrians, Bavarians, Italians and plucky little contingents from the Catholic cantons of Switzerland would soon be on the march to redeem the times."<sup>8</sup> Succeeding events prove that this vision of Goodall's is more than faintly preposterous. Recalling Lady Marchmain in Brideshead, we can realize that Waugh had already indicated that the thoughts and the ways of the religiously pious are not necessarily (nor even likely to be) the thoughts and the ways of God.

When next the crusade-pilgrimage imagery appears, it is during the final stages of the British withdrawal from Crete, the occasion for Guy's discovering the illusions he had held concerning a valorous class and the efficacy of combat. The countryside of Crete reminds Guy of Santa Dulcina, and a young Greek girl leads him to the dead body of a young English soldier, a Catholic, who "lay like an effigy on a tomb--like Sir Roger in the shadowy shrine at Santa Dulcina."<sup>9</sup> Immediately after this scene Guy runs into his old outfit, the Halberdiers, commanded by Colonel Tickeridge. Guy requests that he might join them for the final covering of the British withdrawal.

Had this been an adventure tale--even a number of supposedly "adult" war novels also come to mind--Guy would have rejoined the Halberdiers, covered himself with glory in the fight, and either emerged victorious or died nobly. Instead, he is refused permission to join the fight. This refusal causes him to be overwhelmed with his old feeling of desolation. He feels like "Philoctetes set apart from his fellows by an old festering wound; Philoctetes without his bow. Sir Roger without his sword."<sup>10</sup>



Two additional evocations of the crusade image pattern conclude this stage of Guy's pilgrimage. Ivor Claire discourses on the changing concept of "honour" the evening before he disobeys a direct order to surrender, violating the code of honor as Guy then understands it. Also, during Guy's escape from Crete in an open boat with Ludovic, the one clear memory Guy has of the later stages of the ordeal is "himself holding in his hand, not as he supposed, Gervase's medal, but the red identity disc of an unknown soldier, and heard himself saying preposterously: 'Saint Roger of Waybroke defend us in the day of battle and be our safeguard against the wickedness and snares of the devil. . . .'"<sup>11</sup> The substitution of the spurious saint and deflected warrior for the patron saint of warriors, the leader of the heavenly host, indicates the extent of Guy's illusions.

The second major stage of Guy's journey concludes with his becoming aware of the hallucinatory character of his dreams of valor, arms, and the just war when Russia enters the war on England's side:

Now that hallucination was dissolved, like the whales and turtles on the voyage from Crete, and he was back after less than two years' pilgrimage in a Holy Land of illusion in the old ambiguous world, where priests were spies and gallant friends proved traitors and his country was led blundering into dishonour.<sup>12</sup>

Two years, spiritually inactive ones for Guy, pass before he begins the third and final stage of his pilgrimage. The tide of war has turned in favor of the Allies. Guy had served well in training a Second Brigade of Halberdiers, but Guy's involvement in the circumstances of Apthorpe's death prevents him from entering battle with the Brigade. It appears that a soft, meaningless, routine job is all that is in the offing for Guy. At this point he thinks to himself: "But it was not for this that he had dedicated himself on the sword

of Roger of Waybroke that hopeful morning four years back."<sup>13</sup>

The next use of sword images introduces, and, perhaps, helps to integrate, the humorous line of Ludovic's artistic career which appears to be tangential to the main theme. The "Sword of Stalingrad," forged as a gift to the people of Stalingrad at the command of the King of England, occasions the re-introduction of Ludovic. It might appear that this whole block of material has little to do with the rest of the work, but the reiteration of the sword image allows us to see sub-surface tie-ups to the main crusade-pilgrimage (in medieval times the expression of chivalry) of a number of diverse concepts.

For Guy, in the light of his views on Germany and Russia as the modern age in arms, the Sword of Stalingrad serves as a symbol of dishonor, a complete confusion in, or unconcern with, the matter of a just war. But for the people of England, they "were suffused with gratitude to their remote allies and they venerated the sword as the symbol of their own generous and spontaneous emotion." This attitude is also a confusion, but it is a far less culpable one than the one which we see existing on higher levels. One of these high level plotters of confusion is Sir Ralph Brompton. When Sir Ralph comments that Ludovic's discourse on swords has little to do with Stalingrad, Ludovic reminds him that swords played a part in the start of their own relationship. Ludovic sees the gift sword as an occasion to write a poem about his private experience of guilt. The apparent triumph of the sword, the modern age in arms, reverberates with irony against Guy's father's teaching at the school of Our Lady of Victory. That the sword's triumph is really not a triumph, but its opposite, is suggested when the American, Lieutenant Padfield, pretends to have discovered a mistake in it: "The escutcheon on the scabbard will be upside

down when it is worn as a baldric."<sup>14</sup> As was the case with that booby Joseph Mainwaring in Put Out More Flags, an unsympathetic character speaks with far greater wisdom than he himself realizes. Guy, his father, Ludovic, Ralph Brompton, the "Loot," England's King, and her people are all part of a pattern, a chivalric tapestry.

The old idea of chivalry at its purest is brought forth at the funeral of Guy's father. Uncle Peregrine had experienced some difficulty in procuring a proper hatchment; finally he turns up one made by the house carpenter (a touch of fitting simplicity): "The sable and argent cross of Crouchback had not greatly taxed his powers of ~~draughts~~draughtsmanship. It was no ornament designed by heralds to embellish a carriage door but something rare in English ~~armoury~~---a device that had been carried into battle."<sup>15</sup> Indeed, it is a fitting device for the gentle, kind old man who had fought the good fight so long with unwavering faith. It is in the reflections Guy has during the funeral, benefiting, no doubt, from the prayers of his now victorious father, that the groundwork of his own victory is laid.

In the moment of Guy's first victory, indeed, his only active victory, Kerstie Kilbannock refers explicitly to chivalry:

"You poor bloody fool," said Kerstie, anger and pity and something near love in her voice, "you're being chivalrous---about Virginia. Can't you understand men aren't chivalrous any more and I don't believe they ever were."

Guy's taking Virginia back disproves Kerstie's judgment. Like his father he has managed to realize chivalry's ideal: the succor of the weak and helpless. Guy has had the insight that when the tough are hurt they are the weakest and most helpless of all. Indirectly, the other half of chivalry's ideal, the defense (spread) of the faith, is also effected by his action. Paradoxically,

perhaps, "the deep old wound in Guy's heart and pride healed also."<sup>16</sup>

Guy has two further victories, one of recognition and one of acceptance. The first of these is the recognition of his own guilt, his complicity in the sin of wanting war to make up for his failures, his selfishness, and his laziness, "God forgive me," Guy responds to Mme. Kanyl, "I was one of them." Immediately following this utterance Waugh writes: "He had come to the end of the crusade to which he had devoted himself on the tomb of Sir Roger."<sup>17</sup>

Though his illusory crusade, is over, his real crusade is not; a final acceptance, an unconditional surrender to God's will, is required. The clenched fist--like the cane in Guy's tiff with Trimmer during his early Halberdier days--can be seen as a surrogate sword. When Guy hears the horrible outcome of his attempt to be compassionate toward the Kanyls from Gilpin, who indicates smug satisfaction at their execution, he is again tempted to violence: "The temptation was stronger now, but before he had done more than clench his fist, before he had raised it, the sense of futility intervened."<sup>18</sup>

It is possible, perhaps, that the word "futility" might suggest to the reader who has not been following the development of the imagery of chivalry that Guy's crusade ends in frustration or quiet despair. But the word "temptation"--it is assumed, of course, that the word is a deliberate choice in preference to such words as urge or impulse--should correct such a misleading impression. Temptation suggests an urge or a prodding toward evil or improper action. A "sense of futility" is the proper reaction; it is violence, not life, which is futile. At the end of his crusade-pilgrimage, Guy learns the lesson about swords Peter had to be taught in the Garden of Olives.

A related pattern of images deals with religious ritual; the association with the crusade-pilgrimage is a natural one. The general effect of the imagery of religious ritual is also one of naturalness in that it is appropriate to Guy's character.

If in the handling of religious ritual a novelist is attempting to give the impression of the roundness of life, the temptation to be avoided is the desire to impose the orderly progression of liturgy on the disorderliness, the apparent chaos, and the lack of progression that are characteristic of modern experience--especially the modern experience of war.

In Sword of Honour references to important liturgical occasions appear, but their order and importance are controlled by what is happening to the major characters, especially Guy, and to the world at large, not vice versa. Reference to the liturgical services of All Soul's Day, Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, and Easter Saturday underscores and illuminates the quality of Guy's experience. As a practicing Catholic, Guy naturally observes these days; but since, like most Catholics, Guy does not order his life by the Church's liturgy, mention of liturgical feasts, though recurrent, seems casual. Perhaps it would be fair to say that the liturgy, having always been an accepted feature of life for Guy, generally is as unobtrusive as the furnishings of one's own bedroom. Frequently the reader is aware of the commentary such images make on Guy's situation far more than is Guy himself.

Not all images of religious ritual, however, appear to be spaced so casually or haphazardly. In those which are repeated, especially confession, there is an immediately noticeable progression. The first mention of Guy's going to confession is at Santa Dulcinea at the outset of the novel. His confession is sterile: "Into that wasteland where his soul languished he need not,

could not, enter. He had no words to describe it." There is some advancement when Guy confesses in Alexandria: "He knew what he had to say." In the final mention of Guy's confessing in Bari to an inattentive priest, who is more interested in cigarettes than the state of his penitent's soul, Guy plumbs the depth of his spiritual life. He accuses himself of constantly wishing to die. In response to the priest's flustered question about despair, Guy responds: "No, father; presumption. I am not fit to die."<sup>19</sup>

In contrast to Guy's slow and clouded development, immediately following his confession at Bari, we have Virginia's first and last confession: "She told everything, fully, accurately, without extenuation or elaboration. The recital of half a lifetime's mischief took less than five minutes."<sup>20</sup> The contrasting confessional styles affords a concise but penetrating insight into the temperamental differences between Guy and Virginia.

The images of religious ritual perform a variety of functions. Structurally the most important of these functions is to jar Guy out of routine mental patterns into a state of more acute awareness. Quite early in the work, when Guy is visiting his sister prior to joining the army, he is puzzled at what he considers the crazy economy of war. The Mass provided Guy with a recognition of his situation: "But next morning as he knelt at the alterrail beside Angela and Tony he seemed to hear his answer in the words of the Mass: Domine non sum dignus." The liturgy of Ash Wednesday drives home to Guy just how badly he and the Halberdier training have languished when Ritchie-Hook arrives at Kut-al-Imara: "The words of that day's liturgy echoed dreadfully in Guy's mind: Memento, homo, quia pulvis es, et in pulverem reverteris." The most important of all of the recognitions triggered by the liturgy occurs at the

funeral Mass for Guy's father. It is a sentence from the Mass, "In memoria aeterna erit justus: ab auditione mala non timebit." The chain of thought this sentence awakens in him leads to the awareness that "one day he would get the chance to do some small service which only he could perform, for which he had been created."<sup>21</sup>

A second function of religious imagery, one apparent in the use of confession, is to give the reader an understanding of Guy's condition of which he himself is unaware at the time. Such a function is by nature ironic, or it involves irony. A most telling instance of this use of imagery occurs with relation to the Jewish refugees. Guy begins to fancy himself "Moses leading a people out of captivity." When heavy mist prevents the Jews from being airlifted to safety, Guy prays: "Please God make it all right. You've done things like that before. Just send a wind. Please God send a wind."<sup>22</sup> The prayer goes unanswered, and though Guy is unaware of it, the reader sees the essential difference between Guy and Moses. Guy desires to be a liberator; it is his final chance for heroism; it is a role he chooses. Moses did not desire to be a liberator; he wanted to avoid heroism, but he was chosen.

The most frequent function of religious ritual in the work is to provide comic laughter. That religion is funny, "comic" in the sense that the term was used at the beginning of this chapter on imagery, is something of which Waugh had long been aware.<sup>23</sup> In the concluding chapter, this study will attempt to describe the nature of "comedy" in Waugh's mature novels, but for now let it serve that by "comedy" is meant something larger than either satire or irony, something aiming at the increase, not the destruction, of life, and something capable of eliciting spontaneous benevolent laughter.

The comic use of religious imagery most suffused with irony is the juxtaposing of major liturgical feasts and their traditional associations of vitality and meaning with scenes from the world of affairs to underscore the vacuity and silliness of the world of affairs. For this purpose Waugh employs the "flashpoint" technique of his early novels. As dawn is breaking on Good Friday, Guy's father, the just man, is "kneeling stiff and upright at a prie-dieu before the improvised altar,"<sup>24</sup> just before a sacristan draws back the curtains to let in the sunlight. The book cuts immediately to London where, at the very same moment, Grace-Groundling-Marchpole is indulging his taste for world conspiracy by opening a preposterously muddled file on Guy.

A more complicated variation of the same pattern revolves around Easter. General Whale--whose nickname is "Sprat" (a small herring)--has been badly used by a committee at the War Office. "All over the world, unheard by Sprat, the Exultet had been sung that morning. It found no echo in Sprat's hollow heart." It is in this moment of desolation that Sprat lays on the farcical operation "Popgun," which is to undeservedly catapult Trimmer to fame. At the same moment: "While the first bells of Easter rang throughout Christendom, the muezzin called his faithful to prayer from the shapeless white minaret beyond the bared wire."<sup>25</sup> There follows an extended description of the demoralized condition of British arms at Sidi Bishr. Throughout the world of affairs the exultation of Easter goes unheard. This use of imagery prepares us for the final necessary shift to the personal life.

A more ambiguous use of irony in religious imagery centers around mention of a "Pentecostal wind" and Mr. Goodall's "releasing toties quoties soul after soul from Purgatory." The first instance referred to deals with fires caused by the German air force blitzing London. The second instance,



occurring on All Souls' Day, like all of Mr. Goodall's words and actions, smacks faintly of the preposterous, but one can never be too sure. Colonel Blount of Vile Bodies and Uncle Theodoric of Scoop were two eccentric old men who were able in some measure to defeat the more profound insanity of the modern world. Though Ambrose Goodall may have worldly affairs and God's interest in them twisted all askew, he is not entirely absurd. His position, as compared to Guy's at this point, is enviable: "The wings of the ransomed beat all about Mr. Goodall, but as Guy left the church he [Guy] was alone in the comfortless wind."<sup>26</sup>

Religious images are also used for the purpose of unambiguous mockery bordering on the burlesque. Guy's debacle with his (then) ex-wife Virginia occurs on St. Valentine's Day. In the original version of Men at Arms there is a paragraph of comment on St. Valentine which begins: "Februato Juno, dispossessed, has taken a shrewish revenge on that steadfast clergyman, bludgeoned and beheaded seventeen centuries back, and set him the ignominious role of patron of killers and facetious lovers."<sup>27</sup> This passage, unfortunately, has been excised from the recension. Frederick Stopp has pointed out how apropos the passage is to Guy's situation with Virginia.<sup>28</sup>

There is lighter mockery in the ritual attending Guy's handing over Apthorpe's gear to Chatty Corner:

Suddenly the wind dropped. It was a holy moment. Guy rose in silence and ritually received the book. The spirit of Apthorpe was placated.

.....  
In his room Guy superstitiously deposited each copy of Chatty's acquittal in a separate hiding-place.<sup>29</sup>

Finally, Waugh employs totally spurious religious images to effect either an immediate or what will prove to be a retrospective chuckle. "A

monotonous liturgical incantation" is how the embarrassment of Lieutenant Dunn's brigade signallers is described: "Throughout the chill afternoon the prayer rose to the disdainful gods." Waugh calls Ritchie-Hook's address to the temporary officers "big magic." He refers to Julia Stitch's presence "as that of a beneficent, alert deity." In sketching the strange relationship of Sir Ralph Brompton and Ludovic, begun at the first short-lived marriage of Lady Perdita, Waugh tells us: "Ludovic, as he now was, constituted the sole progeny of that union."<sup>30</sup>

All these functions of religious imagery when viewed together give some indication of the breadth and variety of Waugh's comic sense.

When we consider the more overtly humorous and comic aspects of Sword of Honour two image patterns stand out: animal imagery, especially dog images; and those images, including booby-traps, which can be classified under the heading of schoolboy pranks.<sup>31</sup> While these two patterns do not recur throughout the whole work, they are particularly vivid, and they control the portions of the novel in which they appear.

Waugh has used animal imagery, particularly dog images, throughout the body of his work for satirical, sometimes wildly funny purposes. The dog image occurs at the beginning of his first novel:

A shriller note could now be heard rising from Sir Alastair's rooms; any who have heard that sound will shrink at the recollection of it; it is the sound of the English country families baying for broken glass. Soon they would all be tumbling out into the quad, crimson and roaring in their bottle-green evening coats, for the real romp of the evening.

The image of the English aristocracy as a pack of hunting hounds is repeated in Vile Bodies to the discomfiture of Mrs. Melrose Ape:

But suddenly on that silence vibrant with self-accusation broke the organ voice of England, the hunting-cry of the ancien regime. Lady Circumference gave a resounding snort of disapproval:

"What a damned impudent woman," she said.<sup>33</sup>

Other animals besides dogs serve a similar purpose. At the end of A Handful of Dust there is a fox image which underscores Brenda Last's lack of full humanity. The concluding image of Scoop is also an animal image, one which indicates the forces of violence and destruction underlying the apparent tranquility of a world on the verge of a second World War. Again, at the conclusion of "Work Suspended" a captive beaver images man's fatuousness in a world about to be transformed by war. The notion which underlies all of these images is that men are no more aware of the whole situation they are in or of their responsibility for this situation than are animals.

In his book on Waugh James Carens details the wealth of animal imagery in Sword of Honour, but he fails to distinguish the various effects these images achieve. He views all of them together as a burlesque, "sustaining the pessimistic-conservative, satirical view of things."<sup>34</sup> This represents quite a lumping together, since not all three of the qualifying characteristics modifying the noun "view" are present in all of the animal images in the novel. In addition, perhaps, it should not be considered hair-splitting if the word "things" is also objected to as lacking precision.

For example, the "pig faces" of a squad of men, Guy's own "gross snout" in gas masks, and the adjutant's remark: "We practically live on rations--like wild beasts,"<sup>35</sup> are pessimistic regarding the army and the war, but they are optimistic in the matter of Guy's being able to learn from experience to arrive at self-knowledge. If at this point in his pilgrimage Guy continued to see everything about the Halberdiers in terms of chivalric splendor, the reader

might well despair of Guy's ability to benefit from experience.

Distinctions should be made as to the effects achieved in the three major uses of dog images, if the rich variety of the work's humor is to be appreciated.

Trimmer's dogginess is initially a jaunty thing: "He passed on with all the panache of a mongrel among the dustbins, tail waving, ears cocked, nose a-quiver."<sup>36</sup> There is something undeniably gay about this dog, and gaiety is in itself attractive. It is the association with by-gone gaiety, "the days of sun and sea-spray and wallowing dolphins," which Trimmer evokes in Virginia that accounts for their brief affair in Glasgow. Granted that both Trimmer's doggy gaiety and Virginia's memories of dolphins are shallow or spurious, they are, nevertheless, gay.

Trimmer is still a gay dog, "nosy and knowing, when he arrives at the canteen where Kerstie Kilbannock works. However, when Virginia appears on the scene he is shaken; the final result is that all his mongrel gaiety disappears. It is Ian Kilbannock, the prince of snobs, who remarks of Trimmer: "Now the poor beast thinks he's in love." While Virginia agrees that "it's too indecent,"<sup>37</sup> the effect on the reader is different. This scene hits home precisely because the "doggy" Trimmer has done something of which only a human being is capable; he has really fallen in love. The joke is on Virginia and Ian. It is doubtful, by the way, whether Ian is capable of this much humanity. The sympathy created for Trimmer through his falling in love distinguishes him from that complete cad, John Beaver, of A Handful of Dust.<sup>38</sup>

Major "Fido" Hound, on the other hand, is a dog of a different sort altogether. The name involves a complex play of humorous associations. Un-

like "Sprat" Whale, the immediate chuckle at the name "Fido" Hound comes not from the incongruous coupling of opposites, but from its very triteness.

"Rover" or "Spot" also would have supplied such a chuckle, but either of these choices would have lacked the further associations apparent in "Fido." "Fido" suggests fidelity, faithfulness, but faithful to what? Among the OED's list of meanings for the word "hound," two apply to Waugh's Major. The second meaning given is: "A dog kept or used for the chase, usually one hunting by scent; now especially applied to a fox-hound; also to a harrier."<sup>39</sup> The associations of the chase and harrying are in keeping with the duties of a soldier in time of war. The associations are time-honored ones, recalling Mark Antony's: "Cry, 'Havoc!' and let slip the dogs of war."<sup>40</sup> The OED's fourth meaning, however, says that when "applied opprobriously or contemptuously to a man," it indicates "a detested, mean, or despicable man; a low greedy or drunken fellow."<sup>41</sup> Will "Fido" be a faithful war-dog or a greedy fellow; will he be faithful to duty or to appetite?

The issue is not long in doubt. Two pages after disclosing that his sobriquet is Fido, Major Hound is tempted:

Behind him lay a life of blameless professional progress; before him the proverbial alternatives: the steep path of duty and the heady precipice of sensual appetite. It was the first great temptation of Fido's life. He fell.<sup>42</sup>

From this point on, Fido is faithful to his appetite. In an extended play on Fido's houndish actions Waugh shows the decline of a man into a beast, and since we have been told he had a choice--he could have chosen duty and manhood--Major Hound reaches far lower depths than any beast. There is no bitterness in the treatment of Fido's fall; he is merely pathetic, beneath scorn:

"His tail was right down. Now he was not fair game."<sup>43</sup> While there is no

vituperation for Fido, neither is there reprieve. The lesson is clear and inevitable: when sensual appetite rules a man, he is on the path to self-destruction.

The concluding passage of the play on Fido's houndishness contains an additional irony, which drives the lesson home:

And in that moment of prayerless abandonment, succour was vouchsafed. Tiny, delicious, doggy perceptions began to flutter in the void. He raised his lowed nose and sniffed. Clear as the horn of Roland a new note was recalling him to life. Unmistakable and compelling, above the delicate harmony of bee-haunted flower and crushed leaf a great new smell was borne to him; the thunderous organ-tones of Kitchen. Fido was suffused, inebriated, transported.<sup>44</sup>

Not only is there the mock-heroic irony present in Roland's horn, whose note signals the warriors' honorable death, but what appears to signal life to Fido's appetite actually announced his death. Appetite puts Fido completely into the power of Ludovic, from whose hands he meets his death.

Appetite promises life but delivers death. The rendering of this lesson is clearly within the realm of satire, but is it pessimistic and conservative? It is pessimistic only if the possibility or likelihood of alternative choices are ruled out. Clearly such is not the case in this section of the novel; not only Guy, but also Sarum-Smith and Halberdier Shanks, two men who gave early indications of being appetitive, do make different choices. If the total view emerging from the treatment of Fido Hound is conservative, it is "conserving" the comic tradition as enunciated by Fielding in his introductory chapter to Book VI of Tom Jones in which he treats of the essential distinctions between mere appetite and the kind of love that interests him.

The use of the pattern of images dealing with schoolboy pranks is illustrative of one important aspect in the general movement of the whole work. This pattern of images is concentrated most heavily in the first stage of Guy's

pilgrimage. Its humorous culmination comes when Ritchie-Hook competes for the use of Apthorpe's "bush thunderbox," but the thunderbox episode is only one of many schoolboy pranks in this section. Such heavy concentration is justified by Guy's dominant mental and emotional state at this stage of his pilgrimage: "It seemed to Guy that in the last weeks he had been experiencing something he had missed in boyhood, a happy adolescence."<sup>45</sup> This statement refers specifically to the earlier days of Halberdier training, but the mood is not dispelled till Apthorpe's death.

There is a range of effects as various as school-life itself in this section. Kut-al-Imara, the scene of the Halberdiers' second phase of training is compared to Dotheboys Hall. The gloom and tedium of life at a third-rate school hangs over this stage of Guy's training. It is in marked contrast to the wholesomeness of his earliest days in the corps which reaches its peak in the guest night party ending in a football game with a waste-paper basket. This is wine-heightened undergraduate exuberance at its best. Another variety of schoolboy and undergraduate humor appears in "The Matter of the Captain's Salutation."<sup>46</sup> Apthorpe is ragged over the matter of whether or not his fellow trainees who have remained lieutenants will salute him. This sort of ragging easily degenerates into an exercise in mental cruelty, but at bottom it displays the adolescent's intolerance of self-importance, and, if kept within bounds, its direction is healthy.

All of the pranks involving Ritchie-Hook are various degrees of the macabre. They run from his advocacy of soccer played between officers and men: "The men go for you and you go for them and there's no hard feelings when bones get broken"; through booby-trapping Apthorpe's thunderbox; to wandering "about

the Holy Land tossing hand-grenades into the front parlours of dissident Arabs";<sup>47</sup> to collecting the head of a Negro colonial soldier as a souvenir. Stated baldly, out of their context, the last two examples appear horrible crimes, not at all in the order of pranks. Yet in context their effects are, in one sense, humorous. With his one eye and maimed hand there is something of Peter Pan's Captain Hook about the Halberdier Brigadier; he comes across as being mythical in a fairy tale sense, rather than fully human.<sup>48</sup> Nor is there any hatred or malice in him:

What he liked was to surprise people. In gratifying this simple taste he had often to resort to violence, sometimes to heavy injury, but there was no pleasure for him in these concomitants. Surprise was everything.<sup>49</sup>

In the second stage of Guy's pilgrimage the number of schoolboy prank images is greatly reduced. There is, however, one hilarious episode involving the Laird of Mugg and his niece. Mugg has a schoolboy's delight in playing with explosives; and the niece, an unbalanced young woman whose spelling and conversation still smacks of the nursery, plays with a printing press. While Mugg's pranks, in the recension, at least, cost his niece and himself their lives, her pro-Hitler broadsides (devoid of punctuation) have an insanely funny effect on Guy's military career. A garbled report of the doings on Mugg which reaches Grace-Groundling-Marchpole and his secret file fits nearly into his theory of world-conspiracy. As a result, Guy is later deemed unfit for service in Italy.

In the final stage of Guy's pilgrimage the schoolboy imagery has virtually disappeared. There are two isolated instances. Obtusely optimistic Arthur Box-Bender explains how the workers who want to help Russia will be handled like children: "It doesn't do them any harm to have a pot of red paint



and splash around with hammers and sickles and 'Good old Uncle Joe.' It'll wash off." The joke is on Box-Bender. The last appearance of this motif describes the activities of H.O.O.H.Q.: "Small bands of experts in untroubled privacy made researches into fortifying drugs, invisible maps, noiseless explosives, and other projects near to the heart of the healthy schoolboy."<sup>50</sup>

The world emerging from the final years of the war has no place for schoolboy pranks and enthusiasms. There is little laughter. In this area Carens' charge of pessimism is more valid; yet the word grim would probably be more accurate than pessimistic, in any ultimate sense. There may be, however, something approaching pessimism beneath the surface of the pranks themselves if Waugh is suggesting that older Englishmen continue their fun by playing at war. What clouds the issue is the question of who or what is responsible for the war. If the pranks are merely a response to an existing situation, they may be blameless, or even beneficial; but if a desire for this kind of fun helps to create the situation, then the pranksters become culpable.

There are a number of minor image patterns which contribute to the richness of the whole work's texture: nature images, food images, clothes images, financial images, and images of official red tape or double-talk. The image of the house and the familiar associations attached to the house, an image so dominant in Waugh's previous work, is here subordinated. It operates in the background of the action, and references to it are relatively infrequent.

Nevertheless, what house images there are parallel and reinforce the movement of Guy's pilgrimage. From a centuries-old position of wealth and security the Crouchback fortunes in the between-wars period had fallen on evil days. Before the outbreak of the war Broome, the family home, had been sold

and turned into a Catholic convent school; and, given Guy's marital status, it appears the Crouchbacks of Broome have come to an end of their line.

During the first stage of his pilgrimage Guy attempts to establish a home with the Halberdiers. A variation of the marriage image so large in Brideshead reoccurs:

Those days of lameness, he realized much later, were his honeymoon, the full consummation of his love of the Royal Corps of Halberdiers. After them came domestic routine, much loyalty and affection, many good things shared, but intervening and overlaying them all the multitudinous, sad little discoveries of marriage, familiarity, annoyance, imperfections noted, discord.<sup>51</sup>

During the homelessness of the second stage of Guy's pilgrimage, Guy's father, the Christian gentleman, proves that he is at home any where. At the conclusion of the final stage of his pilgrimage Guy, remarried, is back at Broome, in the "Lesser House." The reduction indicated in the house's name is consonant with the world situation; but at least the tradition, in the most important sense of it, continues.

If the importance of a pattern of images were to be measured in purely quantitative terms, the dominant image pattern of Sword of Honour would be that pattern dealing with literature and the fine arts, or, more broadly, cultural images. The pattern is not the most important structurally or thematically, but its extensiveness gives some indication of the richness of the whole work's texture. Generally, Waugh's handling of this pattern shows a masterful subtlety of touch, for, with the exception of the Ludovic and Everard Spruce passages in the final sections of the novel, these images are unobtrusive. In fact, it is unlikely that the density of the cultural tradition supporting and serving as a commentary on the action of the work itself

can be perceived on a first reading. There are images from history, the Bible, classic and modern drama, epic and lyric poetry, the novel, the essay, children's literature, painting, sculpture, architecture, and even popular music.<sup>52</sup>

Aside from literature, the art form which supplies the largest number of images is painting. Fittingly, images referring to painters first appear and are clustered most thickly in the section which originally received its title from a constantly reiterated war-time phrase, "In the Picture." Returning from Africa, Guy finds the London sky during the blitz fascinating: "Pure Turner." When Ian Kilbannock suggests John Martin, Guy is not to be persuaded: "Not Martin. The sky-line is too low. The scale is less than Babylonian." Soldiers in gas masks look to Guy like "visions of Jerome Bosch." He expects to find Chatty Corner "sharpening a flint spear-head among a heap of gnawed bones between walls scrawled with imitation Picassos."<sup>53</sup>

Painting images appear occasionally throughout the remainder of the work. They create, as those mentioned above, an impression of Guy's inner state of being, or they illuminate other characters, or they offer a contrast, as the Turner image does, between the significance of what is going on in the world and the mere visual perception of it.

To illustrate the second of these functions, Joe Cattermole is described as a "Zurbaran ascetic" whose speech about the partisans is "a counterfeit almost of mystical love as portrayed by the sensual artists of the high baroque." Further illustrations of the third mentioned function are provided when a small German reconnaissance plane machine guns Guy's troop and then flies off "into the silent quattrocento heaven," and when the route to a rigged attack that is intended to win American support for the partisans is described: "The

convoy set out through a terrain of rustic enchantment, as through a water-colour painting of the last century."<sup>54</sup>

The reference to the world of popular music draws a laugh. There is a somewhat extended play on Cole Porter songs. Trimmer, enamoured of Virginia, croons "Night and Day" while mooning about her. As Ian is phoning Virginia to get Trimmer out of a lunch date with her so he can be palmed off as a proletarian hero to some American journalists, Ian hears Trimmer crooning the lyrics. Ian speaks to Virginia with a parody of Porter's "Miss Otis Regrets": "Colonel Trimmer regrets he's unable to lunch today, madam." Much later, when Virginia is approaching the witch doctor, Dr. Akoranga, about an abortion, the sound of the doctor's tom-tom sets her "thinking of Trimmer who had endlessly, unendurably crooned 'Night and Day' to her."<sup>55</sup>

Literary images are employed in a number of ways. Waugh frequently quotes famous lines to create wildly funny parodies of the original situations. "He nothing common did or mean on their morning of departure,"<sup>56</sup> a parody of Marvell's line about King Charles upon the scaffold, sounds the mock-heroic note as a prelude to the comic "execution" of Apthorpe, whose "throne," the bush thunder-box, becomes his scaffold when it is booby-trapped by Ritchie-Hook.

At times, this use of famous lines for the purpose of parody cuts more than one way. Ian Kilbannock's parody of Thomas Cranmer's words has meaning on several levels. As a shaken Trimmer, who has farcically bungled his role as leader of operation Popgun, pleads with Ian to speed up his reembarking, Ian says drunkenly: "Be of good comfort, Master Trimmer, and play the man. We shall this day light such a candle by God's grace in England as I trust shall never be put out."<sup>57</sup> The lines in the situation are funny in themselves; there

is the additional irony, of which Ian is aware, of his publicity campaign puffing the craven Trimmer into a national hero. But there is also the further irony, of which Ian cannot be aware, that one of Popgun's effects will be to keep alight the candle of faith in England when Trimmer's child will be brought up a Catholic under the name of Gervase Crouchback.

At the opposite pole in the matter of directness from the use of quotations, is the arrangement of scenes which evokes the literary memory. At the outset of Guy's pilgrimage, when he is attempting to get into the army, he spends weeks in Bellamy's writing letters. We are shown a series of four of these letters which begin "Dear General," "Dear Colonel," "Dear Sam," and "Dear Molly" respectively; and then the comment: "He had become a facile professional beggar." At this time Guy engages in numerous discussions on the justness of the war: "The conclusion of all these discussions was darkness, the baffling night that lay beyond the club doors."<sup>58</sup> Guy's situation, the arrangement of the letters ending with an appeal to a woman, and the sentence quoted immediately above strongly suggest Marlow in Conrad's Heart of Darkness. If this association was intended to be evoked in the mind of the reader, it would serve as an indication that, like Marlow's, Guy's journey is to be an inner journey of the spirit.

The host of images evoked by references to individual works and authors is far too large to examine each instance in detail. Among the prose writers evoked are Anthony Trollope, John Ruskin, Henry James, Arthur Conan Doyle, Franz Kafka, and Logan Pearsall Smith; the poets include Homer, Rupert Brooke, Constantine Cavafy, William Johnson-Cory, T. S. Eliot, and Ezra Pound. However, three writers, in addition to the Bible, can be singled out as making their

presence particularly felt: William Shakespeare, Charles Dickens, and Rudyard Kipling.

Shakespeare is omnipresent in Waugh's novels, as has already been indicated in our treatment of Brideshead's imagery. In Sword of Honour there is a particularly diverse use of Shakespearean images. Frank de Souza, meeting Guy at a London theatre, makes jocular reference to both Hamlet and Julius Caesar. At the Laird of Mugg's table Guy, fittingly, imagines a parody of Macbeth's vision of Banquo's descendants. Trimmer's unexpected encounter with Virginia at Kerstie's canteen is punctuated by a parody of lines of a song from Twelfth Night: "This was not the lovers' meeting he had sometimes adumbrated at his journey's end." Lear is evoked in Guy's silence during his recovery from the escape from Crete in the open boat: "Ripeness was all." Ludovic later reacts to Guy's invitation to dinner: "It was as though Banquo had turned host." The most extensive Shakespearean image, the one most functional in the plot, is the Cleopatra image identified with Julia Stitch. In Alexandria the beneficent London minor deity of Scoop becomes Shakespeare's ambiguous woman: "Her eyes were one immense sea, full of flying galleys."<sup>9</sup>

The influence of Dickens on Waugh's work is not obvious, but it is, perhaps, extensive. Waugh's expressed valuation of Dickens is not a very high one,<sup>60</sup> yet it is difficult not to feel that Dickens is a major influence in most of Waugh's comic creations drawn from the lower orders and its upper fringes, starting with Captain Grimes and ending with Trimmer. It is beyond the scope of this study to trace such an influence in detail, but the possibilities are intriguing. Specific references in Sword of Honour are to both Kut-al-Imara, the sight of the second stage of Halberdier training and Our Lady

of Victory, the school in which Guy's father takes a temporary teaching position, as Dotheboys Hall. Also, "Full, Dickensian fog enveloped the city of Glasgow. . . . This was the scene in which Trimmer's idyll [with Virginia] was laid."<sup>61</sup> From Waugh's statement referred to in the preceding footnote, it can be inferred that the Glasgow fog is Dickensian because social and moral as well as physical perceptions have become befogged.

Kipling is another writer for whom Waugh has never expressed great admiration,<sup>62</sup> yet Kipling's poem "Recessional" supplies the literary image most integral to the whole of Sword of Honour. It might also be mentioned in passing that Apthorpe's funeral, in which "two Halberdiers fainted, falling flat and rigid, and were left supine,"<sup>63</sup> smacks strongly of Kipling's "Danny Deever."

The "Recessional" image, however, ties up the first and final stages of Guy's pilgrimage. In the disastrous early days of the war, Guy finds that the speeches of Winston Churchill, the new Prime Minister, are "painfully boastful and they had, most of them, been immediately followed by the news of some disaster, as though in retribution from the God of Kipling's "Recessional." Then just prior to Guy's admission to Madame Kanyl of his complicity in desiring war, in placing his faith in darkness and death instead of in light and life, "Recessional" is recalled by Frank de Souza's words: "The captains and the kings depart. What do we do now, uncle, to keep ourselves amused."<sup>64</sup>

The burden of the theme of Kipling's poem is in the concluding line to all but the last stanza: "Lest we forget--lest we forget!" The particular stanza to which de Souza's words refer includes the lines: "Still stands Thine ancient sacrifice/And humble and a contrite heart." This is the sacrifice that is about to be demanded of Guy. The poem's concluding stanza echoes

Guy's final awareness of the dust that is man's and the strength and mercy that is God's, mercy that has not allowed Guy to remain forgetful.

In summary, then, the major image patterns of Sword of Honour are integral to its action as that action is related to the development of Guy Crouchback, the central character, and to the development of thought and theme as these elements contribute to and emerge from the progress of the whole action. The total effect of the work's imagery, most especially in the variety of its comic functions, is to give a sense of the concreteness and the richness of a culture and tradition within which the experience of the work itself can be seen and judged.



## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>William F. Lynch, S.J. in Christ and Apollo (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1960), p. 91, gives an excellent description of the world of comedy: "It gets below all the categories within which the most of life is spent and destroys the most of these categories (the rich, the proud, the mighty, the beautiful, the style, the Joneses) in its descent. In this descent it discovers a kind of rock-bottom reality in man, the terrain of Falstaff and Sancho Panza, which is profoundly and funnily unbreakable, which has no needs above itself. It seems to be the most inherently confident rung of the finite. It is ugly and strong. Although Father Lynch does not treat Waugh's work, his excellent study, with certain qualifications, can be applied to Waugh.

<sup>2</sup>William F. Thrall, Addison Hibbard and C. Hugh Holman, A Handbook to Literature (New York: The Odyssey Press, 1960), p. 97.

<sup>3</sup>Probably it is this unshakeable confidence in thick, finite, actuality--like the confidence of Sancho Panza--which won the admiration of Edmund Wilson for Grimes and Philbrick of Decline and Fall and Basil Seal in Black Mischief and Put Out More Flags. Wilson labels the quality "audacity" (Classics and Commercials, pp. 141, 145).

<sup>4</sup>SH, pp. 11, 15.

<sup>5</sup>SH, pp. 71, 87, 119, 184.

<sup>6</sup>SH, p. 201.

<sup>7</sup>SH, p. 279.

<sup>8</sup>SH, p. 303.

<sup>9</sup>SH, p. 490.

<sup>10</sup>SH, p. 495.

<sup>11</sup>SH, pp. 508, 517.

<sup>12</sup>SH, pp. 531-32.

<sup>13</sup>SH, p. 549.

<sup>14</sup>SH, pp. 551, 555.

<sup>15</sup>SH, p. 600.

<sup>16</sup>SH, pp. 698-747.

<sup>17</sup>SH, p. 788.

<sup>18</sup>SH, p. 792.

<sup>19</sup>SH, pp. 17, 396, 718.

<sup>20</sup>SH, p. 718.

<sup>21</sup>SH, pp. 38, 131, 601, 604.

<sup>22</sup>SH, pp. 781, 783.

<sup>23</sup>In commenting on his treatment of religion in Helena, Waugh said: "Because I'm treating a religious subject people think it can't be funny. Particularly Protestants" (Breit, The Writer Observed, p. 49). Such a statement might appear shocking in these days of ecumenism, but it is hoped that in post-ecumenical times the remark will evoke only benevolent laughter. The case seems analogous to an Irishman's arriving at the ability to laugh at Playboy of the Western World instead of tearing up the theatre seats in protest.

<sup>24</sup>SH, p. 175.

<sup>25</sup>SH, pp. 390-391.

<sup>26</sup>SH, pp. 266, 304.

<sup>27</sup>MA, p. 169.

<sup>28</sup>Stopp, Evelyn Waugh: Portrait of an Artist, p. 162, remarks: "Perhaps the failure happened because the lover set out as a killer."

<sup>29</sup>SH, p. 324.

<sup>30</sup>SH, pp. 202, 182, 436, 565.

<sup>31</sup>Churchill, "The House of Evelyn Waugh," p. 147, sees these pranks as contributing to what he calls the "comic success" of Sword of Honour. He gives them the richly suggestive label, "school-boy gothic."

<sup>32</sup>DF, p. 2.

<sup>33</sup>VB, p. 138.

<sup>34</sup>Carens, The Satiric Art of Evelyn Waugh, p. 161ff.

<sup>35</sup>SH, pp. 274, 276.

<sup>36</sup>SH, p. 341.

<sup>37</sup>SH, pp. 410, 506.

<sup>38</sup>Churchill, "The House of Evelyn Waugh," p. 144, calls Trimmer "Waugh's worst cad since John Beaver." Trimmer also has qualities in common with Grimes and Philbrick of Decline and Fall as well as Hooper of Brideshead, but the particular blend of traits as they combine in Trimmer constitutes an individual character creation. He is one example (Ambrose Silk and Anthony Blanche present another) of Waugh's ability to make subtle but clear distinctions within a type.

<sup>39</sup>OED, 1933, V, 415.

<sup>40</sup>William Shakespeare, Julius Caesar, III, i, 273.

<sup>41</sup>OED, 1933, V, 415.

<sup>42</sup>SH, p. 459.

<sup>43</sup>SH, p. 469.

<sup>44</sup>SH, p. 485-86.

<sup>45</sup>SH, p. 53.

<sup>46</sup>SH, p. 196.

<sup>47</sup>SH, pp. 80, 75.

<sup>48</sup>This is so despite the fact that Stephen Marcus "identifies" the original of Ritchie-Hook as Lieutenant-Colonel Alfred Daniel Wintle: "As in the case with Dickens' novels, when the original of a character who seems unlikely or outrageous can be discovered, one is always struck by the strict realism of the comic artist's observation--sometimes even his understatement" ("Evelyn Waugh and the Art of Entertainment," n. 1, 354).

<sup>49</sup>SH, pp. 131-32.

<sup>50</sup>SH, pp. 538, 556.

<sup>51</sup>SH, p. 89.

<sup>52</sup>Musical images are scarce in Waugh's novels. Their scarcity becomes more apparent when his novels are compared with those of E. M. Forster or Anthony Powell, two other portrayers of twentieth-century English life. For example, Forster makes considerable use of Beethoven in Howards End, and Powell, from the time Hugh Moreland enters A Dance to the Music of Time in Casanova's Chinese Restaurant, employs musical images as frequently as those from the graphic arts.

53SH, pp. 265, 274, 321.

54SH, pp. 710, 714, 458, 773.

55SH, pp. 499, 621.

56SH, p. 172.

57SH, p. 428.

58SH, pp. 27-28, 30.

59SH, pp. 410, 515, 587, 536.

60 Evelyn Waugh, "Apotheosis of an Unhappy Hypocrite," Spectator, CXCI (October 2, 1953), 363-64, calls Dickens a hypocrite, but one who magnetizes us in our looser moods.

61SH, p. 348.

62 Alex Waugh, "My Brother Evelyn," Atlantic, CCXIX (June, 1967), 54, tells when Evelyn was eleven years old he remarked to Aubrey Ensor, "Terrible man, my father. He likes Kipling."

63SH, p. 264.

64SH, pp. 192, 779.

## CHAPTER V

### FAILURE OF SOCIETY AND THE SECULAR TRADITION

"But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation,  
With an alien people clutching their gods."

--T. S. Eliot: "Journey of the Magi"

The examination of the integrity of structure and the richness of imagery in Waugh's mature novels has, it is hoped, prepared the way for a study of what is finally most important: the human values which emerge from that fictional world.<sup>1</sup>

Such a study inevitably must involve us fully in the very delicate matter of beliefs. That belief affects our reading is inescapable,<sup>2</sup> but to admit as much neither solves nor denies the problem of fully apprehending a work of literature. While no formula or code of critical generalizations exists to insure such a complete reading, one or two general rules for the prevention of misreadings can be posited.

The first and most important of these rules is that it is the beliefs of the author of a work or works which are important, not the beliefs of the man who is that author when he is not writing fiction. In attempting to apprehend the author's beliefs, it is the book itself which must supply almost all of the evidence. This is not to say that our knowledge of whether or not a man who writes novels worships or votes, or how he worships or for whom he

votes, is not helpful, but judgment should be suspended until we have attempted to discover what the book itself says about these and other matters involving values. One result of proceeding in this manner will be the greater satisfaction derived from judgments based on real evidence--the more certain the evidence, the more satisfying the judgment.<sup>3</sup> A second result (one not nearly so certain as the first one mentioned) might well be an increase of sympathy for the author's views, if not an acceptance of them. Even if there is no increase in sympathy, it is no mean achievement to arrive at the real source of antagonism.

These introductory remarks on the problem of belief in literature, as commonplace as they may now be, have been deemed necessary because it is felt that Waugh's mature novels have suffered unduly from criticism that has been directed at the man, not the author. It is perhaps not too much to claim that such personal antagonisms have resulted, at times, in very distorted readings of these novels. An accurate reading of a novelist of artistic merit is in any case a difficult job; if antagonism of beliefs is assumed before reading, the job may well become impossible.

In our approach to understanding the human values in Waugh's novels, our effort will be directed toward seeing what is the particular quality of belief and how that quality of belief operates in the novels. Belief operates in every important area of human experience. While Waugh's conception of the total form of the novel altered radically in his mature novels from what it had been in the early novels, the areas of human experience handled, with one important exception, are the same. We will be able, therefore, to refer more frequently than we have so far to Waugh's earlier practice, and, while still concentrating on the mature novels, show that they represent a development of the earlier

values rather than a break from them.<sup>4</sup>

The concern of the main-stream of the English novel has ever been to present man as he is in society. Wuthering Heights, for example, has been for this reason frequently regarded as a considerable achievement which lies outside of the main stream. Waugh, in this regard, is part of the main stream; society plays an important part in all of his novels. Our examination of values will begin by looking at his picture of the failure of society and its institutions; will proceed by examining his claim that withdrawal, self-fulfillment, and exclusive relationships are unsatisfactory responses to society's failure; and will conclude by setting forth his attempts to provide a truly satisfying alternative response.

From the time of Plato's Republic it has been apparent that a writer's concept of society is inextricably bound up with his concept of the nature of man. This is particularly true of that class of writing we call satire, since satire deals with the exposure to ridicule of the weaknesses of society and its institutions, usually with some aim toward correction. Though satire is by no means the whole of his endeavor, Waugh is a satirist, despite his disclaimer that satire can only be practiced in an age which provides accepted standards against which deviation can be measured.<sup>5</sup> It has been a critical commonplace to state that Waugh, like most satirists, deplores the spirit of the modern age and adheres to tradition. While it is quite true that tradition is the controlling force behind his satire and other elements in his writing as well, there has been a frequent, if not general, failure to understand just what Waugh's concept of tradition is.

We have already mentioned that for Waugh the true tradition is that

which is informed by Christianity, the fullness of which he finds in Catholicism. In saying this we distinguished such a tradition from a secular and, to Waugh, a spurious tradition. But as yet we have not attempted to define or describe with any exactitude the term tradition. Before attempting to expose misinterpretations and to set forth an accurate understanding of Waugh's concept of tradition, we should try to define the term we are using.

The following ideas about tradition are summarized from an essay by the philosopher-sociologist Josef Pieper, an essay which states concisely yet forcefully the orthodox Catholic view of tradition. It is first necessary to distinguish tradition's proper sphere of operation. Tradition is to be excluded where truth can be verified by experience and reason. The next distinction is to recognize that in the question of tradition there are two things involved: process and content. The process is a handing down from generation to generation, but "'tradition' in a strict sense does not come about unless there is realized on the side of the receiver something which corresponds rather exactly to what people call 'belief.'" The contents of tradition can belong to any area of human experience, from the most peripheral to the most central. At the center of tradition's content "is the divine guarantee for the meaning of the world and for human salvation." If this center is preserved, a maximum of change can occur in the externals without breaking the tradition: "This is why the genuine recognition of tradition, unlike mere conservatism, results in freedom and independence." Finally, all tradition is sacred tradition which derives from a divine speech; it is a message from God, a piece of good news.

Pieper further states that locating the source of all tradition in divine speech is certainly a radical answer but that the questioning of the



principle of tradition is a radical question. He concludes his essay by claiming that there is a healing power in tradition and that loss of tradition would result in emptiness.

These, then, will be the ideas to which we are referring when we treat the matter of tradition as it is found in Waugh's novels. A secular tradition, since it does not derive from a divine speech, is, by definition, spurious.

One mistake has been to regard Waugh as a romantic who has a nostalgic hankering for a tradition rooted in that particular kind of order and stability which characterized eighteenth-century England.<sup>7</sup> Probably misreading of the image of the great house, which runs through all of the novels, is in large measure responsible for this error. Even critics aware of the deeper significances of the novels have been tempted to make overly pat identifications.<sup>8</sup>

We do not have to wait for Brideshead to encounter critics identifying the author's values with the great houses he portrays, but with the appearance of Brideshead and Sword of Honour such readings become indefensible.<sup>9</sup> When direct, generalizing intrusions by the author are held to a minimum, as they are in Waugh's early fiction, perhaps an increased possibility of misreading is the price the author pays for the impression of dramatic objectivity. In this situation the critic may be tempted to import values into the work which he feels are the values held by the man behind the author. A look at the house images in several of the novels should clarify the matter.

While it is quite clear that Otto Silenus' rebuilding of King's Thursday in Decline and Fall is a ghastly affair, it is not at all clear that the Tudor building which he destroyed had the author's approval.

What can be certain, whatever the views of the author, the narrator of Brideshead would not have approved of King's Thursday. Charles Ryder says:

"More even than the work of the great architects, I loved buildings that grew silently with the centuries, catching and keeping the best of each generation."<sup>10</sup>

The undramatized narrator of Decline and Fall tells us:

For three centuries the poverty and inertia of this noble family had preserved its home unmodified by any of the succeeding fashions that fell upon domestic architecture. No wing had been added, no window filled in; no portico, facade, terrace, orangery, tower or battlement marred its timbered front. In the craze for coal gas and indoor sanitation, King's Thursday had slept unscathed by plumber or engineer.<sup>11</sup>

If the King's Thursday passage is not ironic, either Ryder's views are ironic or there has been a radical change in the later author's values.

"Coal gas" may be a "craze," but what about "indoor sanitation?" Passages from the two paragraphs immediately following should decide the question of irony. "Quite unspoilt, my dear. Professor Franks, who was here last week, said it was recognized as the finest piece of domestic Tudor in England." How reliable are the judgments of professors in Waugh's novels--Fagin, Mr. Samgrass? Then the present owners brag about a chimney which they have allowed to smoke for three hundred years. Guy Crouchback, we might recall, was not overly fond of the smoky dining hall at Mugg. Finally, we are told of the "modern" visitors to King's Thursday: "the more impressionable visitors might reflect how they seemed to have been privileged to step for an hour and a half out of their own century into the leisurely prosaic life of the English Renaissance."<sup>12</sup> The age of Sidney, Marlowe, Shakespeare, Donne, the Armada, and religious persecutions "leisurely" and "prosaic"? The irony is now unmistakable; especially since these "modern" visitors are reflecting while in a hot bath before dinner, and their reflections are followed by a paragraph detailing the vast amount of unpleasant work needed to keep King's Thursday going.

The oft-quoted passage on Anchorage House in Vile Bodies provides a more important example---since the issues involved are of more importance---of generally undetected irony. There is an unmistakable note of mockery in the concluding sentence of the passage, which should have warned readers to be on guard: "But Mrs. Hoop ascended step by step in a confused but glorious dream of eighteenth-century elegance."<sup>13</sup> The description of the main body of guests preceding Mrs. Hoop does have sympathetic details, but the presence of sympathy does not exclude the presence of irony. In fact, such an admixture has been the very touchstone many modern critics have sought for in their evaluations of all imaginative literature.

The heart of this passage reads:

People of decent and temperate life, uncultured, unaffected, unembarrassed, unassuming, unambitious people, of independent judgment and marked eccentricities, kind people who cared for animals and the deserving poor, brave and rather unreasonable people, that fine phalanx of the passing order, approaching, as one day at the Last Trump they hoped to meet their Maker, with decorous and frank cordiality to shake Lady Anchorage by the hand at the top of her staircase. Lady Circumference saw all this and sniffed the exhalation of her own herd.<sup>14</sup>

Certainly such qualifiers as "brave" and "unassuming" are sympathetic, but the same cannot be said for "uncultured" and "unreasonable." And what of the animal image concluding the quotation? The matter of the "deserving poor" is ambiguous. The greatest irony, however, is present in the attitude these people have toward their Maker.

A thorough-going contrast is afforded by the passage describing the funeral of the senior Mr. Crouchback, a wholly sympathetic character, in Sword of Honour:

As a reasoning man Mr. Crouchback had known that he was honourable, charitable, and faithful; a man who by all the formularies of his

faith should be confident of salvation; as a man of prayer he saw himself as totally unworthy of divine notice.<sup>15</sup>

Individual effort and worth, even of a most reasonable kind, are insufficient. If Mrs. Hoop's "eighteenth-century elegance" and Lady Circumference's "Herd" were the "anchorage" of England in 1930, the ship of state, as the whole of Vile Bodies itself shows, was in imminent danger of foundering.

There are other matters in the novels, besides the treatment of the great house, which show that their author never had much nostalgia for the life of the English aristocracy, especially that of the eighteenth-century aristocracy. It is not that Waugh is not attracted by quiet and order, a life relatively free from distraction; but by itself such a life is simply not enough.

In Put Out More Flags Ambrose Silk, Jewish intellectual, homosexual, and artist, discourses on the plight of European culture; he maintains that Europeans must turn from the conventual to the coenobitic, like the old Chinese. The eighteenth century saw the great vogue for the Chinese in almost every aspect of English aesthetic life. It appears, for a moment, that the author's sympathies are with Ambrose, as the reader's are. Ambrose is callowly and crudely interrupted by Basil Seal. At this point Mr. Bently, a mild-mannered publisher whom Ambrose has called a man of reverence and taste, speaks up. He says that he too was fascinated by the exquisite, idyllic quality of Chinese poetry, but that after reading Godfrey Winn in the Daily Mirror: "for the life of me, Ambrose, I couldn't see the difference between that young gentleman and Yuan Ts'e tsung."<sup>16</sup> These idylls, the author is saying, are always available, but they are not satisfying.

Further evidence against nostalgia for the eighteenth century can be cited from a passage in Helena. Calpurnia, the aristocratic Roman lady ad-

dressings Helena, gives a fair picture of the eighteenth-century conception of a good life; she practically paraphrases Pomfret's "The Choice":

"Yet here I am well and cheerful, busy all day long, doing no one any harm and some people a little good, with the finest garden on the coast and a collection of bronzes. Don't you call that a full life?"

"No, Calpurnia, not really," said Helena.<sup>17</sup>

It cannot be doubted, as the whole novel shows, that the author's sympathies are with Helena.

The mature novels continue to give evidence of the failure of secular society, as imaged in its houses and estates, to present and maintain a sustaining vision of life. In commenting on the Brideshead estate, Eric Linklater has observed that life on such an estate can satisfy the "aesthetic conscience which requires design, not only in statuary, but in life."<sup>18</sup> The aesthetic experience associated with Brideshead is one of classic art, a tranquil repose in the experience of the beautiful. All the descriptive passages with their figures of movement--colonnades, lakes in a series of steps, etc.--are resolved by finally bringing the eye and the mind to rest. Yet the estate confers no lasting repose, no benediction on life, on its inhabitants. Charles and Julia are unable to remain there in happiness, despite their appreciation of its aesthetic qualities.

The estate on the whole is part of the spurious, rather than the genuine, tradition. A portion of the true tradition, Lady Marchmain's religion, given concrete expression in the baroque fountain imported from Italy and the art-nouveau chapel, had been grafted on to it. Initially, the estate appears to offer something uplifting, enriching, and sustaining to Ryder, but he finally realizes it is an illusion and a temptation: "a world of its own of peace and

love and beauty; a soldier's dream in a foreign bivouac; such a prospect perhaps as a high pinnacle of the temple afforded after the hungry days in the desert and the jackal-haunted nights."<sup>19</sup> The strength of the temptation, the power of its aesthetic appeal, is evidenced in the first clause of the quotation; that it is an illusion and a temptation is made clear in the second and the final clauses. Lord Marchmain succumbed to much the same sort of illusion when he chose a mistress and a palazzo in Venice over home and responsibility.

If Waugh had been intent on beating the drum for the sustaining powers of the artistic and architectural splendors of the past, he surely would have had either the whole estate remained unscathed or, at least, some part of it built by Inigo Jones. As it is, that part which remains vital is the rather atrocious and recent art-nouveau chapel.

How Brideshead could have functioned in society but never did, because of the weakness or wickedness of its owners, who are representatives of the aristocracy, is best summed up in an early description of Nanny Hawkins: "Long hours of work in her youth, authority in middle life, repose and security in her age, had set their stamp on her lined and serene face."<sup>20</sup> It is fitting that Nanny Hawkins never leaves Brideshead, for only she had paid the stiff price demanded of one who would dwell in order amidst beauty.

It is ludicrous, however, to regard Nanny as a symbol of the Universal Church; she is merely one individual, a very limited one at that. If she "stands for" anything, it is the belief that money, class, or education are not what determines success or happiness. We have already noted, in Chapter II of this study, that Cardinal Borromeo's house is Waugh's image for the Universal Church. The extent to which Brideshead and its family have fallen from the

acceptable standard can, in one sense, be measured by comparing them to the saintly Cardinal and his household.

When society has fallen on evil days, an establishment like Borromeo's becomes impossible. The estate at Broome in Sword of Honour is much more symbolic of the life of the Church in England than in Brideshead. By the beginning of the war, the physical estate had been thoroughly dismembered. Those portions of the estate, the Lesser House and the home farm, still in the family's possession have been rented; only the spirit which had built Broome lives on in Guy's father and in those "few dry grains" in Guy himself.

The treatment given great houses and estates in both the early and the mature novels is, then, consistent--none of these houses provides sustaining values; therefore, none is totally approved by the author. Having seen, in part at least, what does not constitute the real tradition for Waugh, we might allow ourselves a look at some of his non-fictional public statements to see if they are in harmony with what we have found thus far in the novels. The statements we have seen to indicate that the history of European civilization has shown Waugh what our age must retain and is not retaining and, in the light of which failure, the position he, as a novelist, had to assume, confronted by society as it existed and as it continues to exist. The following statements appeared in English and American periodicals between 1942 and 1947:

Today we see it (the effect of the loss of faith) on all sides as the active negation of all that Western culture had stood for. Civilization--and by this I do not mean talking cinemas and tinned food, nor even surgery and hygienic houses, but the whole moral and artistic organization of Europe--has not in itself the power of survival. It came into being through Christianity and without it has no significance or power to command allegiance.<sup>21</sup>

We all tend to think in a historical way if left to ourselves but our memories and habits of thought are now under constant battery

from publicists to whom anything which existed before 1918 is intolerably antiquated and anything before about 1500 legendary and spurious.<sup>22</sup>

Chesterton was the poetic and romantic child of a smug tradition. Could Chesterton have written like that today, if he had lived to see the Common Man in arms, drab, gray and brown, the Storm Troopers and the Partisans, standard bearers of the great popular movements of the century; had he lived to read in the evidence of the War Trials the sickening accumulation of brutality inflicted and condoned by common men, and seen, impassive on the bench, the agents of other criminals, vile but free and triumphant?<sup>23</sup>

Our Lord's reproaches to the Scribes and Pharisees were directed not at their privileged position but at their betrayal of the trust which justified the privileges.<sup>24</sup>

In the place of the old, simple belief of Christianity that differences of wealth and learning cannot affect the reality and ultimate importance of the individual, there has risen the new, complicated, and stark crazy theory that only the poor are real and important and that the only live art is the art of the people.<sup>25</sup>

The artist's only service to the disintegrated society of today is to create little independent systems or order of his own. I foresee in the dark age opening that the scribes may play the part of the monks after the first barbarian victories.<sup>26</sup>

Waugh, if we might attempt a paraphrase of the leading ideas suggested in the above passages, is a traditionalist who, rather than longing for some past age, desires a stability and certainty beyond that which can be imposed by any particular age or situation. He is a Christian traditionalist because he sees that what is timeless about man nevertheless has a historical dimension in the historical Incarnation of Jesus Christ, an event which once having occurred remains true for all time. He recognized that society in his own time had disintegrated because it had so thoroughly cut itself off from its roots in Christianity; the vocal organs of this society, its communication media, have been engaged in a concerted attempt to make the disintegration permanent; and the cult of the Common Man, the value this society has substituted for Christian



Civilization, has become a destructive, barbaric idolatry. In the face of all this he has affirmed the need, not to conserve, but to construct an order which will appear isolated and reactionary to the chaos around it but is actually a continuous development of the Christian tradition from which it derives its being.

In the light of these ideas, the notion apparent in some popular journalism<sup>27</sup> that because of his high regard for "tradition" Waugh had opted out of any involvement with twentieth-century man must be suspect. To have a nostalgia for a past age, whether that age be the eighteenth or the fourth century, which prevents one from living effectively in his own time (like Mini-ver Cheevy in E. A. Robinson's poem) is indeed a serious manifestation of immaturity,<sup>28</sup> but it is one difficult to reconcile with Waugh's exemplary war record, frequent and regular contributions to a variety of periodicals, and, most importantly, his steady stream of novels. "You are immature because you refuse to deal seriously with our own time," is not nearly so accurate a charge as, "You are immature because your ideas as to what our time needs are not the same as mine." Whether or not this latter charge is valid, is beyond the scope of this study; each reader must decide it for himself.

Our specific concern in this chapter is to grasp as fully as possible the failure of society to supply the characters in Waugh's novels with sustaining values. We have already examined the great house in this regard, and in so doing distinguished between what is for Waugh the true and the spurious tradition. Two other major aspects of his treatment of society must now be considered. The first of these, a matter closely related to or actually involving great houses and estates, is whether or not the novels are seriously

marred by their author's alleged social snobbery. Our final concern will be to examine how society's most important institutions function in the novels. These institutions in the order in which they will be treated--an order moving from the intimately personal to the broadest of public concerns, or from the interior to the exterior--are marriage, education (the schools and the press), civil government, and the military.

That the novels, especially the mature novels, are seriously marred by the author's snobbery is an almost universal complaint of unfriendly critics and one which has its echoes even among generally favorable critics.<sup>29</sup> It is perhaps difficult to distinguish between the form and the substance of snobbery in actual practice. For example, if to have a hierarchical view of life, to regard some people, actions, and attitudes as being better than others, is to be a snob, then Waugh is an outrageous snob. But if this be true, so then are all orthodox Christians and, apparently, even Christ Himself. Our concern with the charge of snobbery is to discover whether preferences are exhibited in the novels which are difficult or impossible to reconcile with orthodox Christian belief, or are the novels consistent with Waugh's statement quoted above "that differences of wealth and learning cannot affect the reality and ultimate importance of the individual."

A good many of the specific charges prove to be the result of either a theological difference or, as was the case of nostalgia for the eighteenth century, the reader's lack of attention to detail. Nigel Dennis, however, is justified in being annoyed that in Put Out More Flags Waugh allows rakes and playboys to become part of the "new spirit" while all radicals are strictly excluded.<sup>30</sup> Since radicals, Poppet Green and her crowd, are included in the

novel, this objection does not violate the author's freedom to choose his own subject matter. The objection, valid here, would not apply, however, to Sword of Honour in which Communists are portrayed as valiant warriors: Joe Cattermole is highly regarded by Brigadier Cape, and Frank de Souza wins the Military Cross. Yet Sword of Honour and Brideshead are the objects of the most serious charges of snobbery.

The most violent criticism has centered around the character of Hooper in Brideshead. John Coleman has written: "The most notorious nastiness comes, of course, in Ryder's condescensions to Hooper, the mean Common Man. . . . But Hooper died too, one wants to cry out, in their ten thousands to make the world safe for well-nourished snobs like Ryder: one cry is as valid at the other."<sup>31</sup> Even Frank Kermode, whose treatment of Brideshead is generally laudatory, feels it is outrageous to damn Hooper for his manners.<sup>32</sup>

Hooper, Atwater of Work Suspended, and Trimmer of Sword of Honour have often been regarded as cut from the same cloth. While it is true that there are similarities, the distinctions among the three preclude mere repetition. It is in finer distinctions, as we have noted before, that Waugh is really interested. But focusing for the moment on their similarities, we can say that the trio have their predecessor in Conrad's Donkin and their successor, now termed a "hero," in Amis' Lucky Jim. Of Waugh's three, Atwater's occasionally aggressive, even threatening, manner is nearer to the surly, spike-throwing Donkin, while Trimmer's chameleon-like resourcefulness of persona places him closer to the many-faced Lucky Jim. Hooper is not that much like any of the others; all he really shares with them is an aversion for work and responsibility. But if we dwell too much on analogies, Hooper, as he is in Brideshead,

blurs, and we can be led to accept any judgment as being a valid judgment.

Hooper is a platoon leader in an infantry company whose sole concern as an officer is to keep his men from being "browned-off" at him: "'If you get on the wrong side of these fellows they take it out of you other ways.'"<sup>33</sup> This is the complete reverse of the traditionally accepted military attitude expressed a few pages later by the company's Sergeant-Major. Hooper's attempted familiarity with his troops has bred contempt, and he is continually being bamboozled by them. A desire not to irritate at all costs may be "harmless" enough in a civilian, but in a combat infantry platoon leader it is disastrous. The point is underplayed, but it is manifestly true, given his position, that Hooper is anything but "harmless."<sup>34</sup>

Despite the education he has been given in "humane legislation,"<sup>35</sup> Hooper would like to put the inmates of the local insane asylum into the gas chamber. The irony of his attitude is that if Hitler's methods were applied, he would be among the first to go. The effect of this distinct unpleasantness in Hooper's character is modified by his refusal to be insulted, a quality which renders him merely pathetic.

Ryder's "feeling which almost amounted to affection"<sup>36</sup> for Hooper, condescension, if you will, stems from a recognition that in one sense Hooper really is not responsible for the wretched state of his manhood. Ryder's feeling is aroused by the insufferable treatment Hooper received at the hands of the regiment's new Colonel, a man who should know how to command but is actually as incompetent as Hooper. Waugh's novels have said this same thing in essence since Decline and Fall (this very title sounds the keynote): those who by birth and training should have been most able to run the country have

simply been unequal to the task. If the author's sympathies are identical or very close to Ryder's, the Colonel is damned far more irretrievably than Hooper.

It is the insecure Colonel, after all, not Ryder or Waugh, who damns Hooper for his manners. If Ryder implicitly condemns Hooper, it is for the same reason Dante condemned those who never made it to Hell proper but must forever chase a banner around its outskirts.

As for the multitudes of Hoopers dying, the quality of Hooper's acceptance is hardly the same as that of Lady Marchmain's brothers--the comparison to which Mr. Coleman's "cry" refers. Hooper accepted the army, after attempting to avoid it, "like the measles."<sup>37</sup>

The parvenu Rex Mottram has provided critics of Brideshead with another target. In particular the dinner scene in Paris, in which Charles selects the food and Rex pays the bill, is branded as an example of snobbery.<sup>38</sup> The acceptability of this charge may inevitably be decided by one's own attitude toward, and evaluation of, food and wine--how high in one's hierarchy of pleasures are they placed. Regardless of the outcome of this final test, however, a qualification should be made. If Charles had made the same reflections while dining with Hooper, he would indeed have been a snob, but Rex has set himself up as a man of the world, a man whose very field of expertise is pleasure; he is supposed to know, and indeed pretends to know, about food and wine. When Charles reflects: "The Burgundy seemed to me, then, serene and triumphant, a reminder that the world was an older and better place than Rex knew,"<sup>39</sup> he is affirming that there are pleasures beyond the grasp of rapacious acquisitiveness and that these are the pleasures, in their own sphere, which will give the deepest and most lasting satisfaction. To uphold a contrary

position would seem to deny that there is any value in education.

While neither Hooper nor Rex is a very charming character, it is still rather difficult to view Waugh as a snobbish champion of the aristocratic class when the most thoroughly despicable character in Brideshead (this is true of all the novels) is an aristocrat, "Boy" Mulcaster--the "Viscount" Mulcaster. A fanatical Communist could not have painted a more repulsive picture of a scion of the dissolute nobility. His list of deficiencies, including a complete lack of social grace, a cretinous intellect, dishonesty, and lechery, is too long to catalogue. If the British aristocracy had a "partisan press," they could scarcely be blamed for pillorying Waugh for this portrayal.

In Sword of Honour one character who is guilty of unfeigned and unrepentant snobbery is Trimmer, who, when his hairdresser's pride is piqued by the inane questioning of an American newsman, says: "I never touched the homey ones." This draws from another of the farcical newsmen the response: "'Godammit,' cried Joe in triumph. 'What d'you know? The Colonel is high-bound.'" <sup>40</sup> Trimmer, however, has too much energy, is far too vulgar and too much a figure of fun, to accuse the author of snobbery for creating the character.

Guy Crouchback also has been accused of snobbery, and to some extent the charge is accurate. Overcoming snobbery is part of Guy's pilgrimage. He does have the grace to recognize when he has been a snob, and to regret his behavior: his snubbing of the old tenor at the Officer's House after the concert, and his treatment of the Goanese steward on the troop ship. At these times, when Guy is really a snob, he does not have the author's sympathy. But something like his refusal "to accept correction on matters of art from the former sporting-journalist," <sup>41</sup> is a matter of education and cultural development among social

equals, not snobbery.

The former "sporting-journalist" referred to is Ian Kilbannock, a titled aristocrat, and a most thorough-going snob: "I got him right down in the end [Ian says of an Air Marshall he has used as a stepping-stone]. . . . I made him break out in boils and blains from social inferiority--literally."<sup>42</sup> That is real snobbery, but Ian most certainly does not have the author's approval; he is one of the most unsympathetic characters in the whole work.

Ian is a development of the type of character Waugh first employed in Professor Silenus in Decline and Fall. The attitude and value of these characters are rejected by the author, but he permits them to make statements which accurately analyze the world in which they live. In this area, Ian shows Waugh's development as a novelist. As a character he is consistent, and also convincing, when in a state of prophetic drunkenness he proclaims: "The upper classes are on the secret list. We want heroes of the People, to or for the people, by, with and from the People."<sup>43</sup> That he should succeed in making a hero of Trimmer is perfectly credible. Perhaps we have become jaded with over-exposure to publicity frauds, but Trimmer's fame does not seem exaggerated; if anything, it strikes one now as being underplayed. The reappearance of Professor Silenus at the end of Decline and Fall to tell us what life is really like, however, is unconvincing. The accuracy of his metaphor of life as a wheel at an amusement park clashes with the absurdity of his previous utterances about houses.

There are two other characters, besides Ian, in Sword of Honour who are completely devoid of sympathy: Sir Ralph Brompton and Gilpin. One is an aristocrat and one from the "lower orders." Which is worse? The question

seems to be one of shades of black. If there is little to choose in the matter of qualitative unpleasantness, quantitatively there is much more aristocratic unpleasantness in Sword of Honour, just as there is in Brideshead and in most of the early novels--Put Out More Flags being the one notable exception. Of course, most of Waugh's characters are from the gentle class, but it would be a reverse snobbery which would insist an author must draw his characters from the masses.<sup>44</sup>

It would seem, then, that the conclusion to be drawn from the evidence of the novels themselves is that only for Put Out More Flags does the charge of snobbery leveled against the author have any validity.

Of the rather extensive list of society's institutions which are presented as subjects for satire in Waugh's novels,<sup>45</sup> the perdurable target is marriage and the family. The most trenchant indictment of the failure of marriage in modern society in the early novels occurs in A Handful of Dust. The characters' closer approach to the "roundness" of the characters in the mature novels enhances their credibility and their claim on our emotions. When mothers fail to recognize their sons, or sons defame their mothers, in Vile Bodies, there is such an air of fantasy about the whole affair that the effect is merely amusing. But when Brenda Last expresses relief that it is her young son who has been killed instead of her caddish insipid lover, as she had first supposed, the effect is shocking. We recoil in horror from Brenda's sense of values, as we do from Goneril's and Regan's.

There is a marked change from Decline and Fall to A Handful of Dust in the scope or extent of the breakdown of marriage. Vile Bodies, the novel which was written between these two, in retrospect represents a halfway point



in the change. Margo Beste-Chetwynde (Metroland) of Decline and Fall is presented as being extraordinary; in fact, all of this work's major adult characters with the exception of Paul Pennyfeather, the "hero," are regarded by the author as abnormal. The author allows himself one generalizing intrusion which, after stating Paul's normality outside of the narrative, concludes:

For an evening Paul became a real person again, but next day he woke up leaving himself disembodied somewhere between Sloane Square and Orslow Square. He had to meet Beste-Chetwynde and catch a morning train to King's Thursday, and there his extraordinary adventures began anew. From the point of view of this story Paul's second disappearance is necessary, because, as the reader will probably have discerned already, Paul Pennyfeather would never have made a hero, and the only interest about his arises from the unusual series of events of which his shadow was witness.

This authorial judgment is supported by the narrative. In prison Paul reflects that Margot is different from himself and other people, and in the epilogue, Peter Pastmaster reminds him of the difference: "You know, Paul, I think it was a mistake you ever got mixed up with us; don't you? We're different somehow. Don't quite know how."<sup>46</sup> The reader, however, does know how. The Paul Pennyfeather who is reading for the Church at Oxford, like the Paul who had dined in Belgravia the evening quoted above, is a real person. Margot and Company are among the few, chosen few perhaps, who inhabit the world of fantasy.

In Vile Bodies the Bright Young People are trying to create a fantasy world of their own, an attempt at a better alternative to the "radical instability"<sup>47</sup> in the existing world order. Father Rothschild speaks of the prevalence of divorce among the young as a hunger for permanence, but most of the Bright Young People in the novel are too busy partying to think of marriage. We might infer the burlesque of marriage enacted by Adam, Ginger, and Nina is typical, but since Nina's marrying Ginger is the only marriage to take place in

the novel, the whole thing remains an inference.

In A Handful of Dust the breakdown of marriage is general. Not only is Brenda Last wayward, but her sister had an affair, Mrs. Rattery's and Jenny Abdul Akbar's marriages failed, and Milly, the girl Tony hires to take to Brighton so Brenda might present evidence for divorce, had a child by her stepfather when she was sixteen.

This general breakdown of marriage, at least among the upper classes, carries over into Brideshead: Lord and Lady Marchmain's, Julia and Rex's, Charles and Celia's marriages all fail. Mrs. Champion carries on with Rex; and "Boy" Mulcaster buys his way out of an engagement. This picture of actual marriages is similar to the one seen in Anthony Powell's A Dance to the Music of Time. In Powell, the scope is much broader since there is a whole galaxy of characters who exchange marriage partners and lovers as casually as dancing partners. In Brideshead this is true of the behavior of Charles, Julia, Celia, and Rex for a time. It is most certainly true of Virginia Crouchback.

There is one important difference, however, but since only eight (at this writing) of the projected twelve volumes of Powell's work have been completed, this difference may be a temporary one. In reviewing Powell's Casanova's Chinese Restaurant Waugh commented on the narrator's inability to distinguish the nature of the relationship of marriage: "Mr. Powell owes us something more solid than this evasion of the novelist's duty if he expects us to sympathize with the anxieties of his creations."<sup>48</sup> In Brideshead, Julia's decision and the realization it brings to Charles makes the necessary distinction in a direct, unambiguous, positive way. Marriage is not a casual and temporary engagement, but a profound and permanent union.

This distinction had been implied, negatively perhaps, in the earlier works. It is here in the matter of marriage where Waugh's previously quoted remarks about accepted standards of behavior being necessary to the satirist apply.

The bitterness of Peter Pastmaster's remarks in the epilogue of Decline and Fall can be seen as a condemnation of his mother's actions--his words are quite direct. But what about Nina's letter which Adam reads on the battlefield at the end of Vile Bodies, or the animal imagery which concludes A Handful of Dust; does not the full effectiveness of these passages rely on the reader's acceptance of marriage as a sacred, profound, and permanent union? In a society such as Powell pictures, Waugh's satirical thrusts are apt to be blunted, if not merely sent glancing harmlessly off the armor of impenetrable ignorance. Perhaps it is for this reason that Waugh in Put Out More Flags felt constrained to "tell" us about the relationship between Basil Seal and Mrs. Angela Lyne:

It was one of those affairs, which, beginning light-heartedly as an adventure and accepted light-heartedly by their friends as an amusing scandal, seemed somehow petrified by a Gorgon glance and endowed with an intolerable permanence; as though in a world of capricious and fleeting alliances, the ironic Fates had decided to set up a standing, frightful example of the natural qualities of man and woman, of their basic aptitude to fuse together; a label on the packing case "these chemicals are dangerous"--an admonitory notice, like the shattered motorcars erected sometimes at dangerous turns in the road; so that the least censorious were chilled by the spectacle and recoiled saying, "Really, you know, there's something rather squalid about those two."<sup>49</sup>

That a radical change had taken place in society's attitude towards marriage is evidenced in the mature novels themselves. In 1926 when Julia Flyte wanted to marry Rex Mottram, a divorced man, the old guard stayed away from the wedding to show their disapproval. But in 1938 when Julia wants to divorce Rex, he does not have to worry about a divorce having any adverse ef-

fect on his career: "A divorce would do him no harm with these cronies; it was rather that with a big bank running he could not look up from the table."<sup>50</sup> The old guard are no longer on the scene. The gambling metaphor is revealing, as it is appropriate to the society in which Rex flourishes, an oligarchy in its final stages of dissolution. Finally, in 1944 when Guy Crouchback wants to remarry Virginia, to resume the "for better or for worse, till death do us part" vow, society and propriety, in the person of Kerstie Kilbannock is outraged. Her final remark to Guy is: "You're insane."<sup>51</sup>

In a healthy society, if a particular family is incomplete or corrupt, individual members of that family can draw sustenance and enlightenment from the society's institutions. But when there is a general breakdown in the family, the basis of society, it is unlikely, if not impossible, that society's other institutions will remain intact.

The first institutional extension of the family generally encountered by the individual is the school. Decline and Fall, of all Waugh's novels, is most directly concerned with education and its effects. The chief target is the third-rate seedy private school. Dr. Fagan's school is the fantastic prototype of such schools.<sup>52</sup> Public schools, however, also receive a shot in passing; Paul Pennyfeather reflects: "Any one who has been to an English public school will always feel comparatively at home in prison."<sup>53</sup> The general impression gathered from the whole novel is that the best that can be done with formal education is to avoid as many as possible of its deleterious effects.

The next teacher to appear in Waugh's novels after Decline and Fall is Mr. Samgrass, an Oxford don, in Brideshead. He is a fraud, representative of that which is most despicable in the academic community. Samgrass is more

polished and urbane than Lucky Jim's colleagues who are scrambling for survival at their "red-brick" university, but more limited in scope and interests than the enigmatic Sillery, who keeps popping up, floating serenely on currents of tension, in Powell's Dance to the Music of Time. Samgrass's outstanding characteristic is his dishonesty. It is not at all surprising to discover in Book II of Brideshead that he has left the university and become "one of Lord Copper's middle-aged young men on the Daily Beast."<sup>54</sup>

Lord Copper is one of the gallery of minor characters who people the particular world which Waugh has created, and who help to establish a kind of coherence in the development from the early novels through the mature novels. He makes brief appearances in several early novels and is referred to both in Brideshead and Sword of Honour. There is a full portrait of him in Scoop, or perhaps it would be more accurate to say a full-blown caricature. Copper is as ridiculous an egoistic muddlehead as one of Dickens' minor fools. There is, however, in the absolute power which he wields, so blithely ignorant of its effects on the lives of countless individuals, and in the absolutism of his commercial values, more than just a trace of frightening correspondence to the actual situation. One suspects, as has been previously testified to in the matter of Ben Ritchie-Hook, that Waugh has underplayed the actual situation. When Copper is joined by Samgrass, we see the Nested custodians of language and information, the school and the press, in an ignorant, smug, deceitful league against the truth. A faithful reader of Waugh's might have foretold that it would be the Daily Beast that would champion Trimmer, make of him a folk hero of the first water.

Formal education as it is presented in Sword of Honour is a more complex matter than has so far been here suggested. In Brideshead we are made aware

that apparently there are two types of education in England: Hooper had been taught a different kind of history than had Ryder. It seems, from what we find in Sword of Honour, that this difference is one more of class than of generation. Arthur Box-Bender comments: "Naturally the workers are keen to help Russia. It's how they've been educated."<sup>55</sup> This seems to imply that his son Tony has been educated differently.

What is the quality or tone of this lower class education? There are no sustained discourses on educational method as we find in utopists like Plato and More, dystopists like Orwell and Huxley, or satirists like Swift; Waugh's picture of education must be pieced together from small bits found here and there. The history taught to Hooper was "a profusion of detail about humane legislation and recent industrial change."<sup>56</sup> In view of Hooper's irresponsibility, there could be a Donkinesque "What's in it for me?" ring to this concept of history. The possibility is strengthened by the discovery in Sword of Honour that the despicable, self-important Gilpin had been a school teacher before the war. Perhaps the best to be said for education as seen in the history given Hooper is that it prepares one to live in the modern world. However, there is a huge irony lurking here; Mr. Scott-King, Waugh's dim, but finally sympathetic schoolmaster, refused to aid in such a preparation and sees his refusal as the most long-sighted view possible.<sup>57</sup>

The Oxford which Ryder remembers was composed of basically three types of students "a small circle of college intellectuals, who maintained a middle course of culture between the flamboyant 'aesthetes' and the proletarian scholars who scrambled fiercely for facts in the lodging houses of the Iffley Road and Wellington Square." The word "facts" has pejorative connotations.

The inadequacies in this aspect of proletarian education will be treated more fully (in Chapter IX) when we deal with Joe Cattermole, the dedicated and effective Communist in Sword of Honour. The aesthetes, too, are deficient; they will be dealt with in Chapter VII. The middle-of-the-road intellectuals are not praised in Brideshead. Charles reflects: "I sometimes wonder whether, had it not been for Sebastian, I might have trodden the same path as Collins round the cultural water-wheel."<sup>58</sup> Turning a water-wheel is a useful but dull and dehumanizing task.

In Norman Douglas's South Wind, a book Ryder possessed during his earliest Oxford days, one he termed "commonplace,"<sup>59</sup> Mr. Keith discourses at length on what would constitute the ideal education. The reader's problem in South Wind is to discover how closely the pompous Keith's views in these matters coincide with the author's. Waugh is not even that helpful; none of his characters, sympathetic or unsympathetic, discourses on ideal systems of education. It is even more difficult to piece out positive educational views than the specific characteristics of deficient education.

The most beneficial aspects of an Oxford education have to do with the atmosphere in which friendship may be cultivated rather than any intellectual values. In a society which has almost completely lost its hold on the true tradition, education appears limited to forming taste through an exposure to works of art which are in some way part of or related to the tradition. In the authorial intrusion into Decline and Fall referred to above, the Paul Pennyfeather who exists outside the events of the novel is "an intelligent, well-educated, well-conducted young man, a man who could be trusted to use his vote at a general election with discretion and proper detachment, whose opinion

on a ballet or a critical essay was rather better than most people's, who could order a dinner without embarrassment and in a creditable French accent, who could be trusted to see to luggage at foreign railway stations, and might be expected to acquit himself with decision and decorum in all the emergencies of civilized life."<sup>60</sup> This picture of the results of education does not change substantially; practically the same description could be given of Guy Crouchback.<sup>61</sup>

The picture of government in the whole body of Waugh's novels is even gloomier than that of education. There is no picture as such of pre-war government in Brideshead, but, from a few scattered remarks and the situation itself, the spirit incarnate in "stupid" Mr. Outrage of Vile Bodies, "inattentive" Sir Samson Courteney of Black Mischief, and the "poor booby" Sir Joseph Mainwaring of Put Out More Flags is still running the show. An admission of Lord Marchmain's reveals the cause of the dry rot that is about to bring down the whole aristocratic structure; in fact, the attitude he expresses covers a multitude of evils in all the works: "I suppose it is a disgraceful thing to inherit great responsibilities and to be entirely indifferent to them. I am all the socialists would have me be, and a great stumbling block to my own party."<sup>62</sup>

At the close of Brideshead the war has pushed Rex Mottram and his friends, the harsh-voiced shouters of slogans, into important government offices. This group, from what we hear of it, is a good deal like Rex, the avant-garde of the Brave New World: not "a complete human being at all . . . a tiny bit of one, unnaturally developed; something in a bottle, an organ kept alive in a laboratory . . . something absolutely modern and up to date that only this ghastly age could produce."<sup>63</sup> They are cronies of the press lords, another



tentacle of the octopus of graceless wealth. With their big cigars, second magnums, and big tables at the Sporting Club they are unlikely to fulfill the rigorous demands of responsible authority.

In Sword of Honour many brief scenes scattered throughout the work present a commentary on the changing features of English government. Pieced together, these scenes produce a darkening effect on something which in Waugh's work had never been bright. Arthur Box-Bender, Guy's brother-in-law, and Mr. Elderberry, both members of Parliament, are two drab muddleheads who have a good deal in common with Courteney and Mainwaring of the earlier novels. Box-Bender delights in effecting small household economies, but his lack of awareness in matters of any real consequence makes it difficult to conceive of his ever doing anything genuinely constructive. At the beginning of the war Box-Bender, like most of the "old order," civilian and military, is not at all concerned about justice in international affairs. He is, however, a man of great faith—in all the wrong things: the 1939 Government, the Maginot Line, and taxi drivers. At the close of the second stage of Guy's pilgrimage, he reveals, along with an unshaken confidence in the British way, a small capacity for duplicity concerning the workers and aid to Russia. In the work's final chapter both Box-Bender and Elderberry have lost their seats in Parliament. Elderberry has lost his to Gilpin: "Gilpin was not popular in the House but he was making his mark and had lately become an undersecretary."<sup>64</sup> Considering Gilpin's aforementioned character and Communist affiliations, it is a rather ominous conclusion to the political scene.

Military matters, especially those on levels higher than the regimental, are in a comparable muddle, and even regimental affairs in Brideshead are

grossly mismanaged. In Sword of Honour figures like Air Marshall Beech, huddling under a billiard table at Bellamy's, and General Whale, attempting to launch his various aborted schemes at H.O.O.H.Q., seem to be caricature figures out of sheer farce, but, as we have already remarked, some observers maintain that Waugh has underplayed the reality.<sup>65</sup> Like the world of education, the military has its frauds: Trimmer's "Operation Popgun," designed for the comfort of General Whale, and the phony raid on the demobran blockhouse to impress the visiting American general. The military also has its disgraces: Ivor Claire and Fido Hound.

However, when left alone, the regiment (or the Commando) does not do too badly. Halberdier tradition and discipline make a man of Sarum-Smith, a fellow who had been but a poor reflection of Trimmer. The Halberdiers on the whole perform bravely and honorably during the withdrawal from Crete. Traditions of regimental soldiering cannot do much for a whole society, but they can help a few individual men. When the regiment is tampered with from above, however, morale dissolves and chaos results, as when Chatty Corner, the jungle-man, and Dr. Glendenning-Rees, the sea-weed eater, are sent to aid Tommy Blackhouse's Commando in mastering the arts of mountain warfare.

The most disastrous confusions occur when politics and the military are mingled: England abandons her Serbian allies, and Churchill is sold a bill of goods on Tito. The advice to keep clear of politics, which sounds so sensible and effortless to carry out during Guy's early days with the Halberdiers (Churchill's becoming Prime Minister causes only the most casual of barrack's comments) becomes, by the final stages of the war, sinisterly ambiguous. When Brigadier Cape utters the advice, he precedes it with the statements: "Neither you nor I are going to make his home in Yugoslavia after the war. How

they choose to govern themselves is entirely their business."<sup>66</sup>

Perhaps this would be the correct attitude if all parties involved would maintain it, but, since the Russians and the Communists in the British army have made it their business, can the position still be regarded as a proper one? The whole novel seems to suggest that since neither political nor military leaders concerned themselves with justice initially they have become inseparably intertwined in guilt. Among neither group is there evidenced any great concern for expiation.

In concluding Waugh's treatment of the inadequacies of society it might be pointed out that in two of his earlier novels he proved to be something of a prophet: the news stories of the past decade dealing with the emerging African nations make Black Mischief (1932) read like underplayed, on-the-spot coverage; and in Vile Bodies (1930) Father Rothschild says, "We long for peace, and fill our newspapers with conferences about disarmament and arbitration, but there is a radical instability in our world-order, and soon we shall all be walking into the jaws of destruction again, protesting our pacific intentions."<sup>67</sup> In another of his predictions, this one in his non-fiction writings, Waugh states: "I believe we are returning to a stage when on the supernatural plane only heroic prayer can save us and, when on the natural plane, the cloister offers a saner and a more civilized life than the 'world'."<sup>68</sup> The conclusion of Sword of Honour, with Guy on the home farm at Broom and Tony Box-Bender in the monastery, gives little indication of Waugh's having altered his position. How valid is his position still remains to be seen; the "stage" has not yet run its course.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>It is hoped that the myths of neutrality and objectivity have been sufficiently exploded so that no great exception will be taken to our assertion of the importance of human values in the novel. Let the statements of two of the most perceptive recent writers of criticism stand as sufficient evidence in this matter. Wayne Booth, who has been perhaps the chief dynamiter of the above mentioned myths, states: "It is true that both types of search [for 'theme' or 'meaning communicated'], however clumsily pursued, express a basic need: The reader's need to know where, in the world of values, he stands--that is, to know where the author wants him to stand" (The Rhetoric of Fiction, p. 73). Dorothy Van Ghent states: "Finally, we judge a novel also by the cogency and illuminative quality of the view of life that it affords, the idea embodied in its cosmology. . . .--its ability to make us more aware of the meaning of our lives." (The English Novel: Form and Function, p. 7).

<sup>2</sup>Again Wayne Booth supplies a most convincing argument: "We must be very clear that we are talking now about literary experience, not about the pleasures of finding one's own prejudices echoed. The question whether the enjoyment of literature as literature, and not as propaganda, inevitably involves our beliefs, and I think that the answer is inescapable. Anyone who has ever read the same novel 'before and after,' noticing that strange loss of power a novel betrays when one has repudiated its norms, whether of Church or Party, of faith in progress, nihilism, existentialism, or whatever, knows that our convictions even about the most purely intellectual matters cannot help fundamentally affecting our literary responses" (The Rhetoric of Fiction, pp. 139-40).

<sup>3</sup>A discussion of Camus's The Plague among a number of colleagues, all reasonably intelligent people, served as an illustration of this point. For a number of people it was the first reading of the book. A "general impression" was advanced that the only certainty in the book was that human efforts will finally prove futile. This conflicted with other "general impressions" which saw the book assigning considerable meaningfulness to human effort. The first position, it turned out, was based mainly on passages occurring at the time of the plague's withdrawal. On closer examination of these passages it was agreed that words such as "impressions" and "seemed" do not express the same values as words like "fact" or "were." Both pessimists and optimists, if these words can be used to describe the holders of the "general impressions" mentioned above, were forced to adjust their estimation of the novel's expressed values. It was not clear, however, if the adjustment caused more pleasure or displeasure.

<sup>4</sup>Bergonzi, for example, viewing the outcome of Guy's actions in Sword of Honour, feels that "the dominating myth of much of Waugh's work is deflated"

("Evelyn Waugh's Gentleman," 35).

<sup>5</sup>"Fan Fare," 60.

<sup>6</sup>Josef Pieper, "Focus: On Tradition," Country Beautiful, V (November, 1966), 38-43.

<sup>7</sup>For these charges see Macaulay, "Evelyn Waugh," 376; Sean O'Faolain, The Vanishing Hero (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1956), p. 61; and D. S. Savage "The Innocence of Evelyn Waugh," Western Review, XIV (Spring, 1950), 197-206. In answering the charge of nostalgia for the eighteenth century, Waugh wrote: "It was Mr. Clive Bell, the champion of post-impressionism, who wrote of 'the adorable century,' not I, whose preferences are for the thirteenth or the fourth" ("Mr. Waugh Replies," Spectator, CXCL [July 3, 1953], 24). We hope to show how clearly his novels support his reply.

<sup>8</sup>Delsanto and D'Avanzo, "Truth and Beauty in BR," 142, state: "The Brideshead estate in the novel is representative of the Roman Catholic Church." Our treatment of Brideshead's imagery has pointed out the inaccuracy of such an identification.

<sup>9</sup>Dennis, "Evelyn Waugh: The Pillar of Anchorage House," 350-61, and Carens, The Satiric Art of Evelyn Waugh, pp. 24-31, for example, give essentially the same reading to the values inherent in the house imagery, especially in Vile Bodies. Having the advantage of the later works' testimony, Carens is the more culpable of the two. Their mistake is to regard the treatment of noble houses from King's Thursday in Decline and Fall through the Brideshead estate as expressing straightforward approval and admiration.

<sup>10</sup>BR, p. 226.

<sup>11</sup>DF, pp. 151-52.

<sup>12</sup>DF, p. 326.

<sup>13</sup>BV, p. 176.

<sup>14</sup>BV, pp. 175-76.

<sup>15</sup>SH, p. 602.

<sup>16</sup>POMF, pp. 226-27.

<sup>17</sup>Helena, p. 81.

<sup>18</sup>Linklater, The Art of Adventure, p. 56.

<sup>19</sup>BR, pp. 321-22.

<sup>20</sup>BR, p. 35.

- 21Phillips Temple, "Some Sidelights on Evelyn Waugh," *America*, LXXV (April 27, 1946), 76, quotes Waugh in the London Daily Express.
- 22Evelyn Waugh, "A Trenchant Tory," Spectator, CLXVIII (April 3, 1942), 332.
- 23Evelyn Waugh, "The Jesuit Who Was Thursday," Commonweal, XLV (March 21, 1947), 561.
- 24Evelyn Waugh, "Marxism, the Opiate of the People," Tablet, CLXXXIII (April 22, 1944), 200.
- 25Evelyn Waugh, "Drama and the People," Spectator, CLXIX (November 6, 1942), 438.
- 26"Fan-Fare," 60.
- 27Time, LXXX (April 22, 1966), 84.
- 28Savage, "The Innocence of Evelyn Waugh," 197, claims that Waugh has remained immature.
- 29Frank Kermode, "Mr. Waugh's Cities," is generally favorable toward Waugh, but he feels Waugh limits divine grace "to those who say 'chimney-piece' and to the enviable poor" (69-70).
- 30Dennis, "Evelyn Waugh: The Pillar of Anchorage House," 357-60.
- 31John Coleman, "No Room for Hooper," Spectator, CCV (July 29, 1960), 187.
- 32Frank Kermode, "Mr. Waugh's Cities," 69.
- 33BR, p. 10.
- 34O'Faolain calls Hooper "the harmless representative in this novel of the post-war world" (The Vanishing Hero, pp. 66-67).
- 35BR, p. 9.
- 36BR, p. 8.
- 37BR, p. 9.
- 38See Spender, The Destructive Element, p. 163; and Macaulay, "Evelyn Waugh," 373.
- 39BR, p. 175.
- 40SH, p. 504.

<sup>41</sup>SH, p. 265.

<sup>42</sup>SH, p. 372.

<sup>43</sup>SH, p. 375.

<sup>44</sup>Waugh has stated: "Class consciousness, particularly in England, has been so inflamed nowadays that to mention a nobleman is like mentioning a prostitute sixty years ago. The new prudes say, 'No doubt such people do exist, but we would sooner not hear about them,'" ("Fan-Fare," 60).

<sup>45</sup>See McCay, "Idea and Pattern in the Novels of Evelyn Waugh," pp. 88, 91-92, 113, 173, 206-07, for a list of Waugh's targets.

<sup>46</sup>DF, pp. 164, 291.

<sup>47</sup>VB, p. 185.

<sup>48</sup>Evelyn Waugh, "Marriage a la Mode--1936," Spectator, CCIV (June 24, 1960), 919.

<sup>49</sup>POMF, p. 26.

<sup>50</sup>BR, p. 297.

<sup>51</sup>SH, p. 699.

<sup>52</sup>Waugh relates that the most fantastic of Llanabba Castle's inmates, Captain Grimes, is based on an assistant-master Waugh met while teaching at Mr. Vanhomrigh's school, who was even more fantastic than Grimes (A Little Learning [Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1964], pp. 227-29).

<sup>53</sup>DF, p. 254.

<sup>54</sup>BR, p. 265.

<sup>55</sup>SH, p. 538.

<sup>56</sup>BR, p. 9.

<sup>57</sup>Scott-King's Modern Europe (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1949), p. 89.

<sup>58</sup>BR, pp. 27, 44.

<sup>59</sup>BR, p. 27.

<sup>60</sup>DF, p. 163.

<sup>61</sup>These somewhat sketchy impressions garnered from the novels are supported by one of Waugh's non-fiction statements. Waugh, implying that Wain is a snob, states: "Even in the happiest days of the past it was only a small part of the population who fostered the arts and graces. That world still exists and is the proper milieu of the writer. In that world the most acute and influential criticism is uttered in private conversation by people with no identifiable qualifications. . . . Does he [Wain] really believe that one must hold a diploma from some kind of college before one can voice an opinion?" ("Dr. Wodehouse and Mr. Wain," Spectator, CXCVI [February 24, 1956], 244).

<sup>62</sup>BR, p. 99.

<sup>63</sup>BR, p. 200.

<sup>64</sup>SH, p. 794.

<sup>65</sup>Marcus, "Evelyn Waugh and the Art of Entertainment," n. 1, 354.

<sup>66</sup>SH, p. 716.

<sup>67</sup>VB, p. 185.

<sup>68</sup>Evelyn Waugh, "Kicking Against the Goad," Commonweal, XLIX (March 11, 1949), 534.



## CHAPTER VI

### THE FUTILITY OF WITHDRAWAL

The most extreme reaction to life in a disintegrating society void of sustaining values is complete withdrawal. Various degrees of partial withdrawal, carrying various degrees of the author's sympathy, are found in the characters of Waugh's immediate predecessors in the satirical novel: Mr. Eames in Normal Douglas' South Wind, Laura de Nazianzi in Ronald Firbank's The Flower Beneath the Foot, and Henry Wimbush in Aldous Huxley's Crome Yellow to name a few. If Waugh were as negative and ineffectual as had sometimes been claimed,<sup>1</sup> it might be expected that his novels would exhibit a marked sympathy toward withdrawal as an adequate response to the modern situation.

Only Scott-King's Modern Europe (1947), the least successful of the novels (actually an exhibition piece of novella length), gratifies these expectations to any extent. Waugh himself was dissatisfied with his accomplishment in Scott-King.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps the work's failure can be attributed to the author's striking a half-tone. He hits neither the dystopian horror of 1984 or Brave New World nor the champagne sparkle of his own earlier satires.<sup>3</sup> Scott-King's "I think it would be very wicked indeed to do anything to fit a boy for the modern world," incites neither terror nor laughter, but rather a weak, half-amused, half-wistful melancholy.

Of the early satires Scoop might appear to treat approvingly William Boot's withdrawal to the isolation of Boot Magna and his nature column, "Lush

Places." He is last seen writing: "The wagons lumber in the lane under their golden glory of harvested sheaves . . . maternal rodents pilot their furry brood through the stubble." Charming? Idyllic? The novel's last sentence gives the idyl a cuttingly ironic twist which belies the sense of security in William's column. The narrator concludes: "Outside the owls hunted maternal rodents and their furry broods."<sup>4</sup> The judgment implied in this concluding sentence, that security in withdrawal is an illusion, is in accord with the tone of all Waugh's novels. The illusion is most fully and devastatingly exposed in Tony Last's attempt to find the lost city in South America in A Handful of Dust.

In the early novels the energetic characters, who oppose the situation in which they find themselves, are consistently given more sympathetic handling than the weak characters, whose tendency is to withdraw. In Decline and Fall the Phoenix-like Captain Grimes and the protean Philbrick are far more engaging than the ineffectual, retiring Prendergast; clearly the first two are more highly regarded by their author. Likewise, Basil Seal in Black Mischief despite his moral shortcomings, is more attractive and certainly much more fascinating than Sir Samson Courteney. Sir Samson is uninterested and therefore uninteresting. Basil is a rogue, but a rogue without malice; and in a world in which nothing worth while presents itself for the doing, Basil's exuberance in looking for something to do covers a multitude of sins. Colonel Blount in Vile Bodies has not let the modern age change any habits which he finds congenial, but he is not withdrawn. In fact, he is able to bend the modern age to his own wildly eccentric will; at the novel's close he is showing his "all-talkie super-religious film"<sup>5</sup> to adoring audiences of wounded soldiers. Of all the characters in the early novels, Cedric Lyne is the only withdrawing type

who engages the author's sympathies. Even he is most sympathetic after he emerges from his aesthetic retirement and goes to meet his death on the battlefield.

The mature novels with their more developed and life-like situations and characters continue to consistently expose the futility of attempting to merely withdraw. Sebastian Flyte is the most fully developed individual presentation of withdrawal. Everyone knows what inevitably must happen to golden lads and lasses. "It is the blight man was born for."<sup>6</sup> That youth's promise seems universally to remain unfulfilled only serves to heighten the poignancy of the experience when the adult actuality is so drastically different from the youthful promise. Thus it is with Sebastian.

Sebastian's promise is one with the unique quality of his charm: a mingling of beauty, capacity for delight, and open appreciation of everything (except things connected with his family) that is child-like in the best--the Biblical--sense of the term. His responses may be predictable, as Anthony Blanche demonstrates, but they are his own. In anyone else the same reactions would be pure affectation, but Sebastian's genuineness is convincing. It is attested to not only by Charles Ryder, who, were he the only witness, might be accused of being dazzled by mere good looks and wealth, but also by Sebastian's sister Cordelia, Anthony Blanche, and an Oxford barber--rather a heterogeneous group.

Charles's first glimpse of Sebastian is through the window of an Oxford barber shop. He is struck not by Sebastian's good looks but by the Teddy-bear Sebastian is carrying. Towards a college boy carrying a Teddy-bear, the conventional adult would undoubtedly be repelled. It would be an unattractive

"pose." The barber, however, tells Charles that Sebastian is "a most amusing young gentleman," and it registers with Charles that "the man, who, in his time, had ample chance to tire of undergraduate fantasy, was plainly captivated by him."<sup>7</sup>

It might be assumed that Cordelia, because she is Sebastian's sister, would be naturally prejudiced in his favor. She gives, however, candid and very unflattering analyses of the other members of her family. Therefore, when she says of Sebastian: "I love him more than anyone," we have the feeling that there are good reasons for her statement, even though they are not here enumerated. In the second half of the novel Cordelia tells Charles that even the Greek traders with whom Sebastian has been staying in Tunis loved him: "He's still loved, you see, wherever he goes, whatever condition he's in. It's a thing about him he'll never lose."<sup>8</sup>

Perhaps the greatest tribute to Sebastian's attractiveness is rendered by Anthony Blanche, but to grasp this it is necessary to understand something of Anthony's character. He is a masterpiece, one of the finest products of Waugh's craftsmanship. His complexity and the ambiguity of his judgments approach the complexity and ambiguity of life itself, while the acuteness of his perceptions is far greater than what is normally encountered in life. In a number of respects Anthony Blanche is to Ambrose Silk of Put Out More Flags as the Fool in King Lear is to Feste of Twelfth Night. Ambrose, in writing "Monument to a Spartan," proves himself an artist; but in his chosen field Anthony is the consummate artist. His medium is conversation, or really, monologue; for he anticipates others' responses and delivers them himself, keeping complete control of the situation by his language and imagery. Juggler

and creator of illusions which have a disturbing ring of truth to them, Anthony justifies Charles's image of him as the impresario of the Charity matinee.<sup>9</sup>

Along with his many talents and quirks Anthony is intensely competitive and more than a little cruel. Sebastian's hold on Charles's affections goads Anthony's competitiveness into expending the full power of his rhetoric in an attempt to seduce Charles. Because Anthony is fully aware of Sebastian's charm and, despite his other powers, his own inadequacies to call forth love in others, his monologue becomes a brilliant attack on the worth of charm, which, in this case, is the power to elicit love.

Given this power of eliciting love or admiration in almost everyone he meets, why does Sebastian feel the need to withdraw? He is unwilling to assume adult responsibilities; as his very name suggests, he is fleeing God. These facts, however, suggest merely the general outline of his story without getting to the particulars upon which all successful fiction depends.

The beginnings of Sebastian's withdrawal are involved with the break-up of the Marchmain family. Sebastian tells Charles:

It upset me at the time. Mummy tried to explain it to the three eldest of us so that we wouldn't hate Papa. I was the only one who didn't. I believe she wishes I did. I was always his favorite.

Cara tells Charles: "Sebastian is in love with his childhood. That will make him very unhappy."<sup>10</sup> Childhood should be a very happy time, but for Sebastian it is the only happy time, the time of innocence before the world of the family was shattered. Lord Marchmain's sin is his refusal to accept any of his responsibilities. Essentially he refuses to become himself. There can be no real understanding of such a choice; sin, whatever the kind, is fundamentally irrational. Confronted with the irrationality of sin and its effects, most people adjust and go on living; it is necessary to do so. But Sebastian's

childlike simplicity, a great blessing which becomes in these circumstances a great burden, makes adjustment much more difficult.

Lady Marchmain's over-protectiveness takes on for Sebastian a sinister cast, being bound up with his father's desertion. Her approach is the kiss of death to Sebastian's tranquility. He finds his religion an added burden. Sebastian has a gift of unusually strong faith with the infused knowledge which accompanies faith. Anthony Blanche says of him: "He isn't very well endowed in the Top Storey,"<sup>11</sup> but he has a very firm grasp of the most important religious matters, matters of which Anthony, also a Catholic, seems to be unaware. Sebastian recognizes that his Catholicism sets him apart from those around him in a way which makes his pursuit of a pagan concept of happiness impossibly difficult.

Two matters concerned with Sebastian's recognition require comment. First, those around him who do not share his faith are neither Protestants nor Jews, they are neo-pagans or agnostics.<sup>12</sup> Second, Sebastian's recognition is not idiosyncratic. One need not be a believer, but only be acutely aware of the consequences of Christian belief, as is Binx Bolling in Walker Percy's The Moviegoer, to see how one is separated from the pursuit of pagan pleasures.<sup>13</sup>

In flight from family and religion Sebastian turns to friendship with Charles; but Lady Marchmain, unconsciously aided by the cretinous "Boy" Mulcaster's behavior in the episode of the "Old Hundredth," succeeds in withering friendship's growth by making Sebastian dependent on her. At the time when Charles first begins to realize that their friendship is threatened, he says of Sebastian:

He did not fail in love, but he lost his joy of it, for I was no longer part of his solitude. As my intimacy with his family

grew I became part of the world which he sought to escape; I became one of the bonds which held him.<sup>14</sup>

Following the expulsion of Charles from Brideshead, Sebastian undergoes a period of almost complete withdrawal. He then makes a second attempt at a personal relationship with Kurt, but the attempt is thwarted by the spirit of the Modern Age, Hitler's Germany. Kurt's suicide in a concentration camp brings on another period of withdrawal for Sebastian. This includes his "idea of escaping to the savages,"<sup>15</sup> as a prelude to his final reconciliation. The world from which he is attempting to escape may not be a very good one, but escape is not an answer. There can be no escape in this world. In Chapter IX of this study we shall attempt to explain why Sebastian's final condition is a reconciliation and not an escape.

Sword of Honour, while it does not contain any character representing withdrawal in such dimension as Sebastian, does present a wide variety of attempts at partial or complete withdrawal. Among the minor characters "Fido" Hound and Ben Ritchie-Hook, direct opposites in terms of character, are yet similar in that they seek withdrawal. "Fido's" is a complete and pathetic flight from duty in which only appetite, "the thunderous organ tones of Kitchen," keep him in contact with the world outside his own fear. With Ritchie-Hook it was the realization that the world emerging from the war would be one in which he would have no place; he had outlived his usefulness: "Dawkins, I wish those bastards would shoot better. I don't want to go home."<sup>16</sup> Ivor Clair, habitually aloof and withdrawn, apparently has a greater fondness for animals than for men. Truly complete withdrawal is found only in Guy Crouchback's brother Ivor who some eight years prior to the war had gone stark mad and starved himself to death in a London slum.

All of these minor characters serve in this respect as foils for Guy. Guy has already passed through his most extended period of withdrawal at the opening of Sword of Honour. The Russian-German alliance of 1939 brings Guy back into involvement with his fellow men. But the harmful effects of his eight years' withdrawal cling to him. They are sketched rapidly but clearly for us in the opening chapter. The surface quality of the confession he makes before embarking on his pilgrimage indicates his spiritual condition: "Into that wasteland where his soul languished he need not, could not, enter." He is not simpatico with the natives of Santa Dulcina; he simply does not care about them, himself, or anyone: "Guy had no wish to persuade or convince or to share his opinions with anyone. Even in his religion he felt no brotherhood."<sup>17</sup> Guy's pilgrimage is in one sense a journey from withdrawal through the illusion of involvement to a knowing acceptance of real involvement.

Despite his first rush of enthusiasm to get into the war, there is something lacking in Guy's make-up, resulting from his marital failure, which makes it extremely difficult for him to be outgoing. For a time his love affair with the Corps of Halberdiers enables him to make considerable strides towards becoming comradely. But even among the Halberdiers his way is not uniformly smooth; and there are false paths, such as the mustache and monocle of the military stereotype, which constitute an attempt to escape from himself. Having shaved off the mustache, "Guy studied himself once more in the glass and recognized an old acquaintance he could never cut, to whom he could never hope to give the slip for long, the uncongenial fellow traveller who would accompany him through life."<sup>18</sup>

His relationship with Apthorpe is somewhat ambivalent regarding with-



drawal. Though Guy never snubs Apthorpe or intends him harm, and they do become friends of a sort, there is about Apthorpe a kind of basic unreality which causes Guy to view him as a fantasy figure rather than a real man: "The spell of Apthorpe would bind him, and gently bear him away to the far gardens of fantasy."<sup>19</sup> The night prowls with the "thunderbox" are associated with the memories of childhood. But this withdrawal from the real world may be of a healthy momentary sort which prevents Guy's mind from becoming jaded with the routine annoyances of training or overly depressed by thoughts of his fiasco with Virginia.

The Halberdiers, despite the fun provided by Apthorpe, are not able to cure Guy of his habitual melancholy; he will experience more moments of withdrawal. These moments are likely to come during the pauses in his pilgrimage: "Ever prone to despond, Guy became sure that his brief adventure was over."<sup>20</sup> It is here at Southsand, seeking to dispose of the dead Apthorpe's gear, that he begins to think of himself as a gentler version of his brother Ivo. There is also something of Ivo in Guy's protracted silence in the hospital ward following his escape from Crete in an open boat.

The strongest temptation to final withdrawal assails Guy in the period between the close of the second stage of his pilgrimage and the beginning of the final stage. The temptation is strongest because it is not triggered by a single incident, but by an accumulation of happenings. The beginnings of this temptation follow closely upon Guy's return from his temporary withdrawal into silence in the hospital. While convalescing at Julia Stitch's, he discovers that Ivor Claire had deserted his post in Crete. This blow is followed almost immediately by Germany's invasion of Russia, destroying Guy's last traces of

hope for a just war. The next two years are a period of suspended animation for Guy in which he is physically occupied with the routine of training. That it is also a period of gradually deepening gloom and apathy seems to be indicated in his remark to his father: "I don't think I'm interested in victory now."<sup>21</sup>

Guy's gloom sharply contrasts with his father's cheerfulness. Though his father has lived in retirement in Matchet, a seaside resort, since before the war, there has never been a hint of his having withdrawn from life. He is delighted to have the opportunity of teaching a form in a Catholic boys' preparatory school which had moved to Matchet. When Guy desponds about victory, his father scolds him for not minding his own job. In a follow-up letter Mr. Crouchback encourages Guy to stop moping and to think of the future. The letter is all the more remarkable because in it he also writes that he knows his own death is near: "You see I am thinking a lot about death at the moment. Well that's quite suitable at my age and condition."<sup>22</sup> This is not withdrawal; there is a proper time for everything, even death. Mr. Crouchback's letter strikes the same note in a much lower key as Paul's second letter to Timothy.

At his father's funeral Guy realizes that "the deadly core of his apathy," even in the days of his enthusiasm for the Halberdiers, was that he had not asked God for anything. When Guy makes the rounds of the funeral guests and one confused lady says: "Of course, I remember now, You're Ivo aren't you," Guy is able to reply with full awareness of the irony involved: "A very natural confusion."<sup>23</sup> Guy's recognition marks the beginning of his final rejection of withdrawal, a rejection further indicated by his taking Virginia back and his confession before being flown into Croatia. In the light of this recognition and rejection, Guy's successful involvement in family and farm, as it is tersely

sketched for us in the final chapter by Arthur Box-Bender, is not at all surprising.

A final remark must be made about Tony Box-Bender. Just as the unconverted Charles Ryder had not understood Cordelia's prediction of Sebastian's last days, so Arthur Box-Bender does not understand his son Tony's entering a monastery. Ivo's madness has haunted Arthur; he fears it may be hereditary. This fear filled his mind when he received Tony's request, written from a P.O.W. camp, for spiritual reading. Arthur's ex-colleague, Elderberry, also regards Tony's action as being terribly odd. That Tony's decision to enter a monastery, like Sebastian's final state, differs from withdrawal will be discussed in Chapter IX.

In summary, while recognizing that withdrawal is an attractive response to a character who finds himself in an ugly or uncongenial situation--especially if the situation appears to be typical of the entire age--Waugh's novels consistently have shown that it is a totally inadequate response. In the early novels the energetic characters have more of their author's sympathy than do the retiring characters; and while the mature novels have neither the exuberance nor the confidence in action portrayed in a Basil Seal, Waugh is more insistent that the characters perform what tasks they can, regardless of how limited their powers may be.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>See Marcus, "Evelyn Waugh and the Art of Entertainment," 350-51; Savage, "The Innocence of Evelyn Waugh," 197; and J. B. Priestley, "What Was Wrong With Pinfold?", New Statesman and Nation (August 31, 1957), 244.

<sup>2</sup>See Breit, The Writer Observed, pp. 43-44.

<sup>3</sup>Basically the same judgment is given by Carens, The Satiric Art of Evelyn Waugh, pp. 148-49.

<sup>4</sup>Scoop, p. 215.

<sup>5</sup>VB, p. 311.

<sup>6</sup>Gerard Manley Hopkins, "Spring and Fall: To a Young Child," Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), 14.

<sup>7</sup>BR, pp. 31-32.

<sup>8</sup>BR, p. 277.

<sup>9</sup>BR, p. 102.

<sup>10</sup>BR, 85, 98.

<sup>11</sup>BR, p. 56.

<sup>12</sup>It is rather curious that such able critics as Edmund Wilson, Classics and Commercials, p. 300, and Dame Rose Macaulay, "Evelyn Waugh," 375, in dealing with Brideshead have used the term Protestant when what they are referring to is really agnostic. Any devout Protestant would be rightfully incensed at their failure to make such an essential distinction.

<sup>13</sup>Walker Percy, The Moviegoer (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961), p. 207 states: "To be pagan it would be one thing, an easement taken easily in a rosy old pagan world; to be Christian it would be another thing, fornication forbidden and not even to be thought of in the new life, and I can see that it need not be thought of if there were such a life. But to be neither pagan nor Christian but this: oh this is a sickness, Rory."

<sup>14</sup>BR, p. 120.

<sup>15</sup>BR, p. 280.

16<sup>SH</sup>, p. 486, 778-9.

17<sup>SH</sup>, p. 17, 19.

18<sup>SH</sup>, p. 140.

19<sup>SH</sup>, p. 151.

20<sup>SH</sup>, p. 303.

21<sup>SH</sup>, p. 545.

22<sup>SH</sup>, p. 547.

23<sup>SH</sup>, pp. 603, 608.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE FUTILITY OF SELF-FULFILLMENT

The first remove from the extreme response of withdrawal is the attempt at self-fulfillment. In general two kinds of Waugh characters make this attempt: beautiful women and artists. These attempts, while temporarily satisfying, inevitably prove futile.

Waugh's beautiful women have called forth a wide range of critical comment. Of the women in the early novels, including Put Out More Flags, Edmund Wilson has written: "Evelyn Waugh is perhaps the only male writer of his generation in England who is able to make his women attractive." But about Julia Flyte in *Brideshead* he said: "The woman is quite unreal."<sup>1</sup> Bernard Bergonzi is of an opposite opinion: "And in Julia, Waugh has invented an attractive female character of, for him, unusual depth and complexity."<sup>2</sup> Thomas Churchill greatly admires Virginia in Sword of Honour. Operating under what might appear to be a reverse puritanism he states: "Virginia Troy has emerged as the most vital, opportunistic, and ribald woman in recent fiction and, as such, one of the most comic."<sup>3</sup> Frederick Stopp, generally so attuned to his author's intentions, makes the sweeping generalization that a Waugh woman is either "a cool intriguing creature or a waif."<sup>4</sup>

Stopp's statement can serve as a starting point for the present treatment of Waugh's women and their efforts at self-fulfillment. Waugh views the novelist's task, it must be remembered, as one of making fine distinctions.

Had Stopp said intriguing creature "and" waif, his statement would have been no more objectionable than ones which claim all men have in them something of the "king" and something of the "peasant" (or any other two attributes the writer sees as basic to being human). Since they do not exclude other attributes, such statements rarely offend; they serve instead as a kind of root metaphor out of which a large general study can grow. The growth of generalizations, however, estimable elsewhere, is of little value at this stage in the examination of particular novels. The generalized assumption made here is that the attempts at self-fulfillment made by Waugh's beautiful women prove futile. We must now examine the individual novels to see if such is the case. Stopp's dichotomy, however, may be helpful. In seeing how it fails to account for important distinctions, one may arrive at a stronger sense of the individuality of Waugh's women, which, in turn, may make whatever similarities are uncovered all the more impressive.

In the novels written prior to Brideshead, Margo Metroland, as she appears in Decline and Fall, fits Stopp's first category, and the nameless girl with whom Basil dallies at the Malt House at Grantly Green in Put Out More Flags fits the second. All of the other women of any importance are neither simply one nor simply the other. If the women before Put Out More Flags are not developed with anything approaching full human complexity, they do avoid complete flatness, and in their own incomplete way they point to the futility of self-fulfillment rendered more fully in the mature novels.

Margo Metroland is able to remain the cool pursuer of selfish ends only by means of the periodic use of drugs which induce a temporary withdrawal. Her drugged periods occupy a considerable portion of her time, and even Paul Penny-

feather is aware that the days of her physical attractiveness are numbered. Although she has Alastair as a regular young man at the novel's close, her son Peter's harping on the word "young" and the fact she had to marry Metroland indicate her failure.

Nina Blount in Vile Bodies is part waif and part intriguer. She is also possessed of other, more fully human qualities, e.g., the ability to be genuinely moved at the sight of someone else's being uncontrollably happy. Her letter, which Adam reads in the novel's final chapter, maintains the particular juvenile tone of the Bright Young People's insane conversation--hints of pathetic sadness beneath a surface sprightliness--but it effectively dispels any notion of Nina's having achieved fulfillment. A rigorous pursuit of self-fulfillment, however, was never part of Nina's make-up; most attempts at pleasure result in her having "such a pain."<sup>5</sup>

Neither Prudence Courteney in Black Mischief nor Katchen in Scoop is of sufficient importance to be of help in the present inquiry. They are decidedly "flat" characters, reminiscent of some of the women (Anne Wimbush, Rosie Shearwater, and Myra Viveash) in Huxley's early novels. But where Huxley is inclined to write essays about the single trait he is embodying in the woman, Waugh presents one or two brief scenes which are either carried completely by dialogue or in which the narrator's comment is indirect and limited to a short sentence or two.<sup>6</sup>

Brenda Last in A Handful of Dust is given fuller treatment than any of the other beautiful women in the early novels, but even she lacks the complexity of the women in the later novels. Brenda is much more the waif and the intriguer than was Nina Blount. Her reaction to exertion and opposition is character-



istically a child-like collapse, eating sugar out of a coffee cup or dissolving into tears; nevertheless, she is capable of determined effort to get what she wants. Her biggest problem is that what she wants is not very satisfying. When Richard Last says of her at the novel's close: "She had a perfect right to marry again and I hope she and Mr. Grant-Menzies are very happy,"<sup>7</sup> it is clear that this naive hope is doomed to disappointment. The pattern of boredom, adultery, and frustration will be repeated.

These young women are distinguished from one another in a variety of ways, not the least of which is the situation in which they find themselves. Perhaps the most important distinction, the factor that determined our own response, is the sympathy with which they are portrayed. One's sympathies are most engaged by the potentialities of Nina Blount; then there is a descent through the playfulness of Prudence and the amorality of Margo to revulsion at Brenda's selfishness. What binds these ladies together is their common boredom and the imaginative poverty of their attempts to escape from boredom. Parties and toying with sex and power encompass all the alternatives which these ladies are able to envision. As Robert Dale McCay has observed on the picture of "waste land" sex presented in Waugh's early novels: "The power of the drive may be great, but the experiences themselves are unimportant, mere momentary episodes to relieve the taedium vitae."<sup>8</sup>

The passage, quoted in Chapter V of this study,<sup>9</sup> describing the relationship between Angela Lyne and Basil Seal gives evidence that with Put Out More Flags the Waugh woman shows a marked development. The fact that there is little of the sensual in Angela and Basil's relationship indicates that Angela is aware of, or at least desires, more than is offered by the alternatives to

boredom envisioned by her predecessors. In characterization, as well as in other aspects, Put Out More Flags provides a transition from the early to the mature novels. Angela Lyne, Julia Flyte, and Virginia Crouchback, the "heroines" of the war novels, are all in some sense "golden daughters of fortune,"<sup>10</sup> and all at some point in their lives have made determined efforts at self-fulfillment. With these grounds for comparison one can pursue their individual efforts to determine if there is a consistent pattern to their destinies.

As there is no religious dimension to Angela's life, she is the least fully rounded of the three women. Her protest against "waste land" sex is on purely naturalistic grounds. Her marriage to Cedric Lyne was a reaction to the hard-boiled materialism of her father and his circle. Cedric offered an escape into the world of the amateur of art. Angela is forced to agree with Basil that her marriage would not have lasted even if Basil had not come along. "Mrs. Lyne whose conversation was that of a highly intelligent man, who always cleverly kept out of the gossip columns and picture papers, who for fifteen years had set a high and wholly individual standard of all that Americans meant by 'poise',"<sup>11</sup> has created a shell, which to all the world looks like the self-fulfilled woman, in order to cover the terror of inner emptiness.

From the first view of her in a French train, Angela's cool chic is revealed as a pose, a dodge, to distract her from the vacuum created by Basil's absence. "Where is the meaning," is a familiar cry in the modern novel. It can be attributed to Huxley's Myra Viveash and Hemingway's Lady Brett as well as to Waugh's Bright Young People, but what distinguishes Angela Lyne is the spiritual force, the concentration of energies, with which she determinedly plumbs the problem. Her drinking, a surprise to her author,<sup>12</sup> indicates that the problem's solution--the war has given the problem added scope and force--

is beyond her individual powers. Only permanence will satisfy Angela, and permanence is beyond the unaided powers of any mortal. While it is difficult to be very optimistic about the proposed marriage of Angela and Basil at the novel's end, the marriage, as well as the character and quality of her aspirations, points to the fuller exposure of the futility of self-fulfillment in Julia and Virginia in the mature novels.

Julia Flyte, unlike Angela, Virginia Crouchback, or any of Waugh's earlier women, is at least partially the product of Waugh's true tradition. Catholicism extends unbroken on her mother's side of the family back to recusant times. Most probably Waugh's Catholic readers are ready to regard such a situation as beneficial, but his non-Catholic readers could regard it as detrimental.

It must be noted that, while Julia may find the beliefs of her family a hindrance and individual members of her family irritating, she never thoroughly rejects her family as the rest of Waugh's women do. It is a "modern" attitude apparent in Waugh's work since Vile Bodies to completely cast off the family as being a restriction on one's "freedom." In most instances there is very little family to cast off. Regardless of what one's religious convictions are, it seems merely reasonable to assume that if a character feels affectionately attached to her family, the family will exert some positive influence on her. It seems only reasonable then that the members of her family should influence, to some extent at least, Julia's final decisions. Therefore, the Marchmains' Catholicism need not alienate the non-Catholic reader; just as a Catholic reader should be willing to accept a character's deriving benefits from his or her family's long adherence in the face of suffering to Judaism, Lutheranism, or any other religious belief. A distinguishing characteristic of Julia's, then,

one which Waugh's other women do not possess, is the positive influence her family plays in the establishing of the most profound aspect of her identity.

The earliest glimpses of Julia are as a smart debutante of fashionable beauty--Anthony Blanche had described her as "Renaissance tragedy. . . . A face of flawless Florentine Quattrocento beauty."<sup>13</sup> She is coolly impersonal, concerned only with her own pleasures. She wonders why Sebastian does not conform and stop throwing a crimp in her plans by making a nuisance of himself. She is attractive enough to be noticed by Charles, especially since she so closely resembles Sebastian; but she is so clearly uninterested in him that she remains the "sister," something of a minor trial, until the time of Sebastian's sharp decline.

Julia as she is in herself, her uniqueness, comes to the reader through the poetry of Charles's love for her and the knowledge of her that his love brings. Fresh from her first London season, in the flush of her awakening womanly powers, she is self-absorbed. It is indeed difficult here to paraphrase the feeling captured so well in Ryder's language. Two bird images, the bluebird and the kingfisher, however, are most striking. They call forth associations of the same images as used by Eliot and Hopkins respectively. The bluebird image as it appears in "Burnt Norton" is the guide to the garden of the happiness of our first youth, which might be, the poem suggests, a deception. In "As Kingfishers Catch Fire" Hopkins' kingfisher in its action speaks out its own name, is uniquely itself. Both birds are associated with light and shining. The young Julia, then, is the bright shining creature who recalls to the old chaperones the memories of their lost youth; who, despite conformity to fashion in dress and hair style, is uniquely herself. From her father, however, she has inherited a stain "that seemed deepened by something

in her own way of life--waywardness and wilfulness, a less disciplined habit than most of her contemporaries'."14

At this time her wilfulness is directed toward acquiring a suitable husband; marriage was to be a base from which she would begin her conquests. Her wilfulness, combined with the restriction her Catholicism places on marriage to the ranking nobility, as well as a sense of competitiveness, propels her toward Rex. When it is discovered by Bridey that Rex had already been married and divorced, she, delighting in the anxiety she is causing, refuses to be balked and goes ahead with the civil marriage.

Ten years later, having lived with the consequences of her wilfulness, not because of it, but somehow through grace and her up-bringing, she has learned patience, humility, and sadness. No longer is the world something which exists solely for her private delight; aware of her incompleteness, she is ready to enter into enduring relationship.

Virginia Crouchback is the gayest of the three women. Where Angela was self-contained chic and Julia magical sadness, Virginia is spontaneous mirthful laughter. Where Angela is bitterly resigned about the silly girls who are her rivals for Basil's attentions, and the young Julia is girlishly competitive with Brenda Champion over Rex, Virginia resents Bellamy's Club, not other women, as is befitting her more comradely temperament. Of the three girls she is most successful in her attempts at self-fulfillment. Perhaps this is because she has been the least demanding of the three, accepting what has come along. She has been able to live in and for the present moment:

Whatever the disturbances she had caused to others, her own place in her small but richly diverse world had been one of coolness, light, and peace. She had found that place for herself, calmly recoiling from a disorderly childhood and dismissing it from her

thoughts. From the day of her marriage to Guy to the day of her desertion of Mr. Troy and for a year after, she had achieved a douceur de vivre that was alien to her epoch; seeking nothing, accepting what came and enjoying it without compunction.<sup>15</sup>

This summary of Virginia's life up to the second year of the war appears in the final third of the work. The douceur de vivre has been convincingly rendered in the scenes in which she appears in the first two-thirds of the work. Her warmth, the brightness of her talk, and its mischievous humor, are infectious. It is as much a tribute to her dash and vivacity as it is a comment on the breakdown of marriage that she is able to keep up a witty, good-humored conversation with two ex-husbands at the same time without causing either of them any embarrassment.

On New Year's Day, 1940, Virginia, who had returned to England when most of the selfish and the pleasure-seeking were fleeing to the Western Hemisphere, states: "I thrive on the war. It's such heaven being away from Mr. Troy." Four years later, pregnant with the loathed Trimmer's child, she reflects: "It's all the fault of this damned war. . . . What good do they think they're doing? . . . What's it all for?" No longer is she able to live wholly in and for the present. This change in Virginia's attitude began in earnest after her brief fling with Trimmer in Fog-bound Glasgow, but even before meeting Trimmer she had been knocked around by the war. In Glasgow, she regarded Trimmer as her "guide providentially sent on a gloomy evening to lead her back to the days of sun and sea-spray and wallowing dolphins"<sup>16</sup>--a retreat into dreams which the Virginia of two years previous would have scorned.

She is not, however, to be got down easily. One of her most attractive qualities is her resilience. There is a strength about her like Guy's father's. A strange pairing, the saintly old man and the wanton worldling; maybe it is

not so strange after all. More important than toughness, perhaps, it is the secret of their toughness; they share a common generosity. Virginia, at any rate, recognizes a bond of sympathy with the old man. Her only regret in divorcing Guy was the thought of how her action might affect his father.

When Virginia's efforts to have an abortion are rebuffed by the legitimate medical practitioners, she continues her attempts with undiminished candor in the lower circles of the medical profession--she visits Dr. Akonanga, a witch doctor. The richly humorous scene in the witch doctor's office gives Waugh the opportunity to jab his satirist's needle into Modern Man's faith in psychology. It is only after Dr. Akonanga fails Virginia that she begins to seriously doubt her own view of life. She says to Guy, to whom she has turned in desperation: "I've had a dreary war so far. . . . It all seemed such fun at first, but it didn't last."<sup>17</sup>

Permanence, the quest of maturity in the face of time's erosions, becomes a felt need for Virginia, but she is not yet ready to surrender her old hopes unconditionally. The dream of the old gay life dies hard: "Oh, Guy, I wish you were more cheerful. There's fun ahead, always. If I didn't think that, I couldn't keep going."<sup>18</sup> She does manage to have fun even in difficult times, with difficult companions. Guy's uncle Peregrine is a bore of international reputation; yet when he takes Virginia to a discreet fish restaurant, the brief tale of his amours provokes her to spontaneous laughter. Not only does she enjoy Peregrine, he is gratified by her response.

But for all her resilience and determination to have fun, Virginia is up against it; she needs a husband. Guy's decision to take her back, a decision he makes only after knowing that she is carrying Trimmer's child and

that he, Guy, is her last resort, has many unlooked-for results. Not the least of these results is Virginia's unconditional surrender to God in her first and only confession. If her recognition of her inability to be self-sufficient had not finally resulted in this surrender, Everard Spruce's judgment of her (despite the vast dissimilarity between Virginia's vitality and Myra Viveash's expiring boredom) as one of "the exquisite, the doomed, and the damning"<sup>19</sup> would not have been far from wrong. As it is, the reverse of Spruce's statement is true.

Fortunately for Virginia, Guy is not "modern"; the example of a revered and loved father shapes his decision. Had Guy been concerned with "freedom" in terms of self-fulfillment, a work much like A Handful of Dust or one of Anthony Powell's novels would have resulted. The law of the jungle will prevail if human relationships consist only in people consuming one another at will or whim.

The artist is another type of Waugh character who attempts to be self-fulfilled. Like all of the other subjects in the early novels, art and the artist are almost entirely matters for laughter. Art is the expression of the Age and as such is either frivolous, vulgar, or ghastly. Professor Otto Silenus of Decline and Fall, the only "serious" artist to precede Ambrose Silk in Waugh's fiction, is a machine-man, a figure of science fiction. His architectural theory: "The only perfect building must be the factory, because that is built to house machines, not men,"<sup>20</sup> reduces to absurdity the quintessence of the tendencies which characterize all essentially "modern" works of art.<sup>21</sup>

In the mature novels art and the artists become important concerns, but they are not for Waugh the most important concerns. There has been a tendency,



probably quite a natural one, among Waugh's critics to overestimate the importance of the artistic question, especially in Brideshead. Stopp implies that art is a greater matter than friendship,<sup>22</sup> and the final concern of Rodney Delsanto and Mario D'Avanzo is whether or not Ryder will be able to resume his artistic career after the war.<sup>23</sup> To place the concern for art with some exactness in the hierarchy of values found in Waugh's fiction will be one step toward an understanding of the whole of his work.

Leo Hines has written: "Waugh seems to be saying our inner selves quite simply spill out and reveal themselves in the home we choose or the way we design and keep it. We make the world about us."<sup>24</sup> There is nothing in the treatment of artists from Decline and Fall through Sword of Honour to contradict these statements; yet it must be understood that the word "make" is not at all the same as the word "create." The function of the artist as expressed by Stephen Dedalus in A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man--to create something entirely new--would be regarded by Waugh as blasphemous nonsense. Nor does Waugh admit of the artist being a prophet.<sup>25</sup> For Waugh the artist is a maker of the mimetic order. He states his position on the great art of the past and the conditions for its existence: "Its nature was the recording of a noble experience, its condition the enlightened patronage of the individual."<sup>26</sup> Further, he holds that if writing is to possess "magnificence" the artist must be possessed with the beauty or nobility of his subject and by the technique of recording his impression.<sup>27</sup> What determines the "nobility" of the experience is its agreement with the eternal law to which men must conform if their lives are to be of permanent value. Externals, the circumstances of the situation, change; the actors themselves are unique without ceasing to be

typical; therefore, though the basic law remains unchanged, an infinite number of noble experiences are available. This is exactly what we have noted about tradition in Chapter V of this study:<sup>28</sup> as long as the innermost center of tradition remains intact, a maximum of change in externals may be tolerated.

While the above statements may express Waugh's basic theory of art, he is not primarily a theorist. The later novels present a variety of artistic experiences themselves, experiences far more vital than any theory.

Ambrose Silk in Put Out More Flags removes the quotation marks from the adjective "serious" when it is placed before the noun "artist." He is the first of Waugh's fully developed characters to seriously consider Art as something of an absolute value. As an artist Ambrose possesses economy, delicacy, and precision, qualities greatly admired by Waugh himself.<sup>29</sup> Compared with the rest of the characters mentioned in Put Out More Flags--especially the radical poets Parsnip and Pimpernell, who, despite a professed involvement with their time, flee to America at the first hint of war--Ambrose is handled sympathetically. He is also, however, an atheist and a homosexual; his considerable ability and refinement enclose a hollow center. When last seen in his Irish exile, unable to write, Ambrose is a futile and pathetic figure.

It is with Brideshead that the questions of the nature of art and the function of the artist emerge as major concerns. Not only is the narrator an artist who ponders these questions himself, but he also records the artistic judgments of others. There had been a movement in this direction with John Plant, the detective-story writer and narrator of "Work Suspended," but the unfinished nature of that work precludes satisfying judgments. Judging by the fragment extant (including Plant's remark in his postscript: "Neither book--

the last of my old life, the first of my new--was ever finished"<sup>30</sup>), it would be fair to say "Work Suspended" does not deviate from the pattern of artistic futility.

While artistic concerns in Brideshead center in Charles Ryder, the first extensive statement on the artist is made by Anthony Blanche: "Artists are not exquisite. . . . the Artist is an eternal type, solid, purposeful, observant--and, beneath it all, p-p-passionate, eh, Charles?"<sup>31</sup> There is a quantity of truth in this passage, as there is in all of Anthony's statements, but the truth is not necessarily the same as Anthony's intentions or understanding. Anthony's purpose, after all, is seduction. The tone of the quotation and the whole passage from which it is taken is calculated to make "purposeful" and "passionate" synonymous with a highly selection but nevertheless voracious habit of devouring.

Charles's art comes alive, not through any influence of Anthony's, but in the summer weeks at Brideshead with Sebastian. It is a harmonious part of the love of friendship: "I felt a whole new system of nerves alive within me, as though the water that spurted and bubbled among its stones was indeed a life-giving spring."<sup>32</sup> There is no sense of conflict; like the initiation into the delight of wine, art becomes part of the excitement and satisfaction of the moment.

It is only after friendship has failed that Charles begins a whole-hearted pursuit of art. The encounter with good old teachers and bad students in his Paris art school results in a later important conversation:

"They never go near the Louvre," I said, "or, if they do, it's only because one of their absurd reviews has suddenly 'discovered' a master who fits in with that month's aesthetic theory. Half of them are out to make a popular splash like Picabia; the other half

quite simply want to earn their living doing advertisements for Vogue and decorating night clubs. And the teachers still go on trying to make them paint like Delacroix."

"Charles," said Cordelia, "Modern Art is all bosh, isn't it?"

"Great Bosh."

"Oh, I'm so glad. I had an argument with one of our nuns and she said we shouldn't try and criticize what we didn't understand. Now I shall tell her I have had it straight from a real artist, and snubs to her."<sup>33</sup>

It will be worthwhile to try to determine how closely Ryder's opinions on art agree with his author's. Waugh's own opinions might help to direct our examination of artistic matters in the novels, for if "Modern Art is all bosh" to Waugh also, such a judgment implies at least what the function of art is not.

Waugh's position is that Modern Man is disillusioned with himself and his inability to perform the great artistic feats of his ancestors, but instead of relearning the old, forgotten lessons, he turns "meanly" toward "something new." Maintaining that Picasso's intelligent fans are genuinely moved emotionally, Waugh states:

Modern art, whether it is Nazi oratory, band leadership, or painting, aims at a mesmeric trick and achieves either total success or total failure. . . . We may envy them [those who are moved] their experience. But do not let us confuse it with the sober and elevating happiness which we derive from the great masters.<sup>34</sup>

The popular artist had long been the target of many sly jabs of Waugh's needle: Mrs. Beaver's decorating service; Adam Fenwith-Syme's proposal to write twelve books in one year; Poppet Green's painting. One of the better laughs at the expense of popular art occurs when Basil Seal draws a mustache on Poppet's head of Aphrodite. Ambrose Silk sees it and says:

That I consider good. I consider it good, Poppet. The moustache . . . it shows you have crossed one of the artistic rubicons and feel strong enough to be facetious. Like those wonderfully dramatic old chestnuts in Parsnip's Guernica Revisited. You're growing up, Poppet, my dear.<sup>35</sup>

What characterizes for Waugh the popular artist in any medium is that he is so concerned about making a quick killing that he never bothers to master the tools and skills of his craft.

Neither John Plant, whose detective stories exhibit structure, good grammar, and economy, nor Charles Ryder, whose work "had nothing to recommend it except my growing technical skill, enthusiasm for my subject and independence of popular notions," are popular artists. In fact one of Charles's weaknesses is diametrically opposed to the practice of the popular artist: "It is my vice to spend too long on a canvass, never content to leave well alone."<sup>36</sup> In the light of Waugh's revision of Brideshead, it would appear that he shares Ryder's weakness.

Charles's major difficulty as an artist, however, is his lack of an integrating factor, an understanding of the beginning and the end, which guides his rendering the spiritual-emotional-physical complex that is his subject. When he has some intuitive glimmering of this wholeness, as in his four paintings of Marchmain House, he approaches success or satisfaction in his own terms.

The concept of tradition which we have already found operating in Brideshead precludes art supplying its own raison d'etre. It is not surprising, then, to find that the practice of his art does not sustain Ryder. In the light of his later knowledge and belief he mocks his youthful dedication to the false idol. Leaving Brideshead in disgrace, Charles said: "I have left behind illusion. Henceforth I live in the world of three dimensions--with the aid of my five senses." We have come to expect this sort of declaration of empirical faith from young men in the pages of modern novels and the art sections of popular weekly magazines, but the author's mockery rings clear in the very

next sentence: "I have since learned that there is no such world; but then, as the car turned out of sight of the house, I thought it took no finding, but lay all about me at the end of the avenue."<sup>37</sup>

It is surprising the critics seem to have missed the mockery of art dissociated from true tradition and have apparently accepted as straightforward Charles's subsequent self-mockery, looking back on the blossoming of his artistic frenzy:

But I had no patience with this convent chatter. I had felt the brush take life in my hand that afternoon; I had my finger in the great, succulent pie of creation. I was a man of the Renaissance that evening--of Browning's Renaissance. I, who had walked the streets of Rome in Genoa velvet and had seen the stars through Galileo's tube, spurned the friars with their dusty tomes and their sunken, jealous eyes and their crabbed hairsplitting speech.<sup>38</sup>

Browning is the tip-off. It is not the real Renaissance but a fanciful, fabricated Renaissance, the fabrication of a man Irving Babbitt regarded as no better than half-educated.<sup>39</sup>

Two critics<sup>40</sup> have even maintained that the author wants us to accept Celia's statement about Charles: "You see Charles lives for one thing--Beauty."<sup>41</sup> One thing certain about Celia is that she does not understand her husband. In the very same scene Charles reflects: "Throughout our married life, again and again, I had felt my bowels shrivel within me at the things she said."<sup>42</sup>

Art by itself for Ryder is not sustaining. The finger in creation's pie has been unable to extract sufficient nourishment: "For nearly ten years I was thus borne along a road outwardly full of change and incident, but never during that time, except sometimes in my painting--and that at longer and longer intervals--did I come alive as I had been during the time of my friend-

ship with Sebastian."<sup>43</sup> When Julia and love claim Ryder, self-fulfillment through art no longer seems to him a viable alternative.

Just as there is little about Captain Charles Ryder, the soldier, to indicate that he was once an artist, so too in the first two-thirds of Sword of Honour, when successful prosecution of the war is the pressing concern, mention of art is scattered and of peripheral importance. Most of the allusions to the arts serve to illuminate some aspect of character, frequently the character's cultural background. This matter of casual allusion to the arts has already been somewhat treated in Chapter IV of this study.

Two matters in this portion of Sword of Honour do require comment. At Julia Stitch's dinner party in Alexandria the Commander-in-Chief recites William Johnson-Cory's poem "Heraclitus," the concluding line of which suggests the permanence of art as contrasted to the transience of the political concerns engrossing the attention of the dinner guests. In retrospect we can see this as a foreshadowing of the concerns to emerge during the final stages of the war. The other matter is the revelation that Corporal-Major Ludovic is engaged in writing a journal of Pensees and descriptive passages. The samples which are given display a gravely humorous cynicism.

In the final stage of Guy's pilgrimage, when the outcome of the actual fighting appears to be no longer in doubt and the problems of the post-war world appear on the horizon, questions of art begin to assume more importance. Waugh comments ironically on the roles of both the artist and the critic in the personages of Ludovic and Everard Spruce respectively.

Ludovic, now a major stationed at an out of the way training station for parachutists, has become obsessed with the desire to write. It becomes

a completely consuming passion, the be-all and the end-all of his existence. Art almost does seem to sustain Ludovic, but he is such an odd person. He enjoys so little that in a sense he seems to carry his own private Hell around with him. The "almost" is a necessary qualification because Ludovic does feel a lack of love. "I require something for love,"<sup>44</sup> he says. He wants a Pekinese like the one Ivor Claire had. The crowning touch in this dance macabre is that Ludovic names his dog "Fido" after Major Hound, whom he has murdered.

Writing before the publication of Unconditional Surrender, Stopp had said: "Ludovic is one of those peculiar natures known to all serving soldiers, the aesthete--other ranks might say 'pansy'--whose hold on life and on the realities of a situation remains tough and sure, when more rigid through seemingly more manly types break down under stress."<sup>45</sup> But even Ludovic cannot break the natural law with complete impunity:

Things had been done by him, which, the ancients believed, provoked a doom. Not only the ancients; most of mankind, independently, cut off from all communication with one another, had discovered and proclaimed this grim alliance between the powers of darkness and justice. Who was Ludovic, Ludovic questioned, to set his narrow, modern scepticism against the accumulated experience of the species.<sup>46</sup>

Fearing (wrongly) that Guy can expose him, he is driven over the brink of sanity to his Pekinese.

His passion for writing, despite his guilt and his oddity, is made quite believable by brief flashes illuminating his past life as a trooper in the Blues and his short "marriage" to Ralph Brompton, who fed him a diet of psychology and Marxist economics and exposed him to the arts. Marx was rejected; psychology and the arts stuck. The key to many of Ludovic's actions lies in the fact that he had "once been at heart--or rather in some vestigial



repository of his mind--a romantic."<sup>47</sup> Ludovic's first efforts as a writer are classically honed aphorisms, but he soon turns to sprawling romantic fiction. On his pensees he took great pains in searching his sacred scriptures--Roget and the dictionary--for the exact word. When he begins his novel, The Death Wish, words pour from him in an unchecked, uncorrected torrent.

Ludovic's novel presents something of a critical crux. Bernard Bergonzi has written: "Is it unfair to conclude that Major Ludovic and Mr. Waugh in Brideshead were both writing much the same kind of book? The conclusion seems to me inescapable."<sup>48</sup> But is the conclusion really "inescapable"? In Waugh's novels characters have been known to deliberately mislead intellectuals, giving them enough rope to hang themselves; for example, Basil Seal's advising Ambrose Silk on the publication of "Monument to a Spartan." Is the author to be presumed less clever than his characters? It could be put forth that the persona Waugh projected through most of his career as a novelist would take great delight in perpetrating such a confusion, but that would lead into the hopelessly complex terrain of the man behind the work. What do the works themselves reveal?

The passage in Sword of Honour which best supports Mr. Bergonzi's judgment reads:

But it was not an old-fashioned book. Had he known it, half a dozen other English writers, averting themselves sickly from privations of war and apprehensions of the social consequences of the peace, were even then severally and secretly, unknown to one another, to Everard Spruce, to Coney and to Frankie, composing books which would turn from the drab alleys of the thirties into the odorous gardens of a recent past transformed and illuminated by disordered memory and imagination. Ludovic in the solitude of his post was in the movement.<sup>49</sup>

The privations, apprehensions, and gardens are certainly part of the composition of Brideshead, but was Waugh's a "sickly" averting; and most importantly was his

or Ryder's imagination "disordered"? If the values which emerge from the whole of Brideshead are essentially the same as those which emerge from Sword of Honour, his imagination would appear not to have been "disordered." Chapter IX of this study shows that these values are essentially the same.

Literary criticism is mocked more in the person of Everard Spruce than novel writing is through Ludovic. At times Waugh allows his tongue, which had been stuck in the side of his cheek, to slip between his teeth in unconcealed derision.

Like many men of the left he had been an assiduous student of Ian Kilbannock and his fellows; a taste he excused by saying that it was his business to know the enemy's order of battle. . . . and many years later, when he came to write his memoirs, he gave the impression that he had frequented their houses in their hey-day. Already he was beginning to believe Virginia was an old and valued friend.<sup>50</sup>

Even Spruce's name has a number of humorous facets to it. "Everard" approximates how the Old English word for boar (bore) would have come down into Modern English; and in addition to an evergreen (always immature, as well as always alive) "Spruce" suggests something nattily modern, a brisk surface efficiency.

In his first meeting with Ludovic, Everard reveals himself as a source-hunting, archetypal critic whose frame of reference is exclusively, painfully modern. Commenting on the image of the Cave which recurs in Ludovic's aphorisms, Spruce suggests Ludovic must have read a lot of Freud. Why not Plato? The joke, of course, is that the relatively unlearned Ludovic is not writing literary, but personal, experiences. The Drowned Sailor and the Cave motifs are not Eliot and Freud, as Spruce suggests, but the nameless sapper Captain and "Fido" Hound.

Spruce's magazine Survival is a typical "little magazine" like the "absurd reviews"<sup>51</sup> read by Charles Ryder's fellow art students in Paris. Its "art supplements" display work which is inferior in draftsmanship to American comic books, and though the magazine is supposedly dedicated to the survival of values, the only value its editor-publisher possesses is self-survival. A Ghastly reduction of the closing stanzas of Ezra Pound's "Hugh Selwyn Mauberley" echoes in the information that "many rare and beautiful volumes perished"<sup>52</sup> to produce Survival and official forms.

If post-war literature in the hands of Ludovic and Everard Spruce appears to be in for a very dim future, it is consoling to recall that someone has been able to remain free enough from the domination of popular trends to write Sword of Honour.

Since art by itself, in the mature as well as the early novels, brings no satisfactory fulfillment, it is apparent that the place of art in Waugh's hierarchy of values is stated most explicitly in Helena. Lactantius, a character described as the world's greatest living prose stylist, says to Helena: "It needs a special quality to be a martyr--just as it needs a special quality to be a writer, Mine is the humbler role, but one must not think it quite valueless."<sup>53</sup> Lest artistic achievement be undervalued, Lactantius hastens to say of the soulless artist:<sup>54</sup>

He might be refuted again and again but what he wrote would remain in people's minds when the refutations were quite forgotten. That is what style does--it has the Egyptian secret of the embalmers. It is not to be despised.

Previously, however, Lactantius, being aware that the one thing words cannot do is "generate their own meaning," thinks: "If only I were a little braver, if

I had dared stay near the centre of things, across the Alps, I might have been a great writer."<sup>55</sup> The place reference, "across the Alps," is to Rome, the center of what for Waugh is the true tradition.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Wilson, pp. 146, 299.

<sup>2</sup>Bergonzi, "Evelyn Waugh's Gentleman," 30.

<sup>3</sup>Churchill, "The House of Evelyn Waugh," p. 145.

<sup>4</sup>Stopp, Evelyn Waugh: Portrait of an Artist, p. 199.

<sup>5</sup>VB, p. 192.

<sup>6</sup>James Carens makes an astute observation on the effectiveness with which Waugh employs limited indirect commentary in a scene involving Prudence and Basil in Black Mischief: "Even Graham Greene, a master hand with sordid details and seedy rooms, has no more sickening image than this of the cigar stump in the hip bath as a commentary on lust" (The Satiric Art of Evelyn Waugh, p. 78).

<sup>7</sup>HD, pp. 305-06.

<sup>8</sup>McCay, "Idea and Pattern in the Novels of Evelyn Waugh," p. 159.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>POMF, p. 25.

<sup>11</sup>POMF, p. 203.

<sup>12</sup>"Fan-Fare," 56-57.

<sup>13</sup>BR, p. 54.

<sup>14</sup>BR, p. 181.

<sup>15</sup>SH, p. 612.

<sup>16</sup>SH, pp. 94, 612, 347.

<sup>17</sup>SH, p. 675.

<sup>18</sup>SH, p. 678.

<sup>19</sup>SH, p. 752.

<sup>20</sup>DF, p. 159.

<sup>21</sup>Jose Ortega y Gasset, The Dehumanization of Art, trans. by Willard R. Trask (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1956), p. 13, states that the seven general tendencies of all essentially modern works are "(1) to dehumanize art, (2) to avoid living forms, (3) to see to it that the work of art is nothing but a work of art, (4) to consider art as play and nothing else, (5) to be essentially ironical, (6) to beware of sham and hence to aspire to scrupulous realization, (7) to regard art as a thing of no transcending consequences."

<sup>22</sup>Stopp, Evelyn Waugh: Portrait of an Artist, p. 118.

<sup>23</sup>Delsanto and D'Avanzo, "Truth and Beauty in BR," 152.

<sup>24</sup>Leo Hines, "Waugh and His Critics," Commonweal, LXXVI, (April 13, 1962), 62.

<sup>25</sup>Harvey Breit records Waugh saying: "A writer has no right to be like Lawrence and Hemingway, thinking they're prophets" (The Writer Observed, p. 149).

<sup>26</sup>Evelyn Waugh, quoted in Stopp, Evelyn Waugh: Portrait of An Artist, p. 20.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., pp. 51-59.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>In praising Angus Wilson's economy in Hemlock and After, Waugh states approvingly: "Now he has produced a novel which in less precise hands might have run to three times its length." ("A Clean Sweep," The Month, ns., VIII [October, 1952], 238).

<sup>30</sup>Evelyn Waugh, Tactical Exercise (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1954), p. 234. Hereafter this text will be referred to as TE.

<sup>31</sup>BR, p. 52.

<sup>32</sup>BR, p. 82.

<sup>33</sup>BR, p. 152.

<sup>34</sup>The Times, London, December 20, 1945, p. 5, col. 6, quoted in McCay, "Idea and Pattern in the Novels of Evelyn Waugh," pp. 177-78.

<sup>35</sup>POMF, p. 36.

<sup>36</sup>BR, pp. 227, 118.

<sup>37</sup>BR, p. 169.

<sup>38</sup>BR, p. 222.

<sup>39</sup>Irving Babbitt, Rousseau and Romanticism (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1919), pp. 211-12, states: "Like the half-educated person, Browning is capable of almost any amount of intellectual and emotional subtlety, and like the half-educated person he is deficient in inner form: that is he deals with experience impressionistically without reference to any central pattern or purpose." It is very unlikely that Waugh, with his view of the importance of the central tradition, would fail to concur with Babbitt.

<sup>40</sup>Delsanto and D'Avanzo, "Truth and Beauty in BR," 145. This is the most extreme instance of distorting the text to make the analogy to Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn" fit.

<sup>41</sup>BR, p. 267.

<sup>42</sup>BR, p. 268.

<sup>43</sup>BR, p. 226.

<sup>44</sup>SH, p. 648.

<sup>45</sup>Stopp, Evelyn Waugh: Portrait of the Artist, p. 173.

<sup>46</sup>SH, p. 626.

<sup>47</sup>SH, p. 569.

<sup>48</sup>Bergonzi, "Evelyn Waugh's Gentleman," 29.

<sup>49</sup>SH, p. 737.

<sup>50</sup>SH, p. 751.

<sup>51</sup>BR, p. 152.

<sup>52</sup>SH, pp. 667-68, 669.

<sup>53</sup>Helena, p. 115.

<sup>54</sup>See Nicholas Joost, "Waugh's Helena, Chapter 6," Explicator, IX (April, 1951), item 43. Joost astutely points out that the Lactantius passage is a piece of brilliantly devious allegory in which Waugh condemns Edmund Gibbon.

<sup>55</sup>Helena, pp. 116, 114.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE INADEQUACY OF EXCLUSIVE RELATIONSHIP

Some of Waugh's characters who pass beyond disillusionment with self-fulfillment--Angela Lyne, Charles Ryder, and Julia Elyte-- continue their attempts to find happiness in some form of exclusive personal relationship; therefore, a study of the values found in Waugh's fiction must proceed to examine the quality of the happiness such relationships bring. Angela Lyne does not present a proper subject for such a study, since Put Out More Flags describes only the initial stages of her relationship with Basil Seal. Unless Guy's affection for the Halberdiers be considered, Sword of Honour does not present a fully developed, intimate, personal relationship. This portion of the study, therefore, must concentrate on Brideshead.

One of Waugh's greatest achievements is the experience of friendship he has rendered in Book I of Brideshead. There is a temptation to label it a "unique" achievement in twentieth-century English language fiction. Huxley's young men, Denis Stone in Crome Yellow and Theodore Gumbril in Antic Hay, have acquaintances but no friends. The recently popular A Separate Peace by American novelist John Knowles presents a relationship radically flawed by suspicion. The possibility of real friendship occurs to the narrator only after the potential friend is dead. The novelist whose work most resembles Waugh's mature novels in subject matter, particularly situation and character types, is



Anthony Powell. In A Question of Upbringing the situation is one in which friendship could possibly have been rendered. There are suggestions of it, especially between Nicholas Jenkins, the narrator, and Charles Stringham; but full friendship never blooms. It is difficult to determine whether the fault lies mainly in Jenkins' innate coldness or in Stringham's interest in other concerns, but the golden presence that is the experience of friendship in Brideshead is absent from Powell's book.

However, the glimpses of friendship in Powell are to be commended. One of the saddest aspects of the present age is that friendship regarded by all previous ages as elevating and satisfying, should have fallen into such disregard that it is generally treated as hallucinatory, homosexual, or of no consequence. Whether it is simply the blight of popularized homosexuality in many artistic media or something more fundamental to society, the representation of serious friendship has effectively been suppressed. The worst of the situation is not that men are made to feel guilty about expressing love for one another in any way; the worst is that they are made to feel that this love is unimportant.

The most distressing criticism to date of Waugh's work is John Coleman's judgment of friendship in Brideshead:

All Mr. Waugh's considerable powers, of humor, vivacity, and pathos, are devoted to persuading the reader of the importance of this prolongation of childhood. . . . but no power on earth could conceal the essential hollowness of the matter. And, since Ryder is so occupied with its defense, he forfeits the respect needed to carry him through the further developments of love and suffering.<sup>1</sup>

Does Coleman regard the dinner party held on the evening of the arrest in Gethsemani--an affair at which friendship was the main topic of conversation<sup>2</sup>--

as an unimportant "prolongation of childhood"? If friendship is not important, whatever is important would seem to be a step toward life as it is in Huxley's Brave New World.

It is, perhaps, fortunate that Waugh wrote Brideshead when he did. Had he delayed, it is doubtful whether even he, confronted by the zeitgeist of the last decade, could have written so movingly of friendship. The indications in his revision of Brideshead are that he could not.<sup>3</sup>

The revisions in the 1960 edition all indicate that the revising mind is more austere in taste and temperament than the mind which gave the work its original shape. Concerning the moods of composition and revision, Waugh writes:

It was a bleak period of present privation and threatening disaster--the period of soya beans and Basic English--and in consequence the book is infused with a kind of gluttony, for food and wine, for the splendours of the recent past, and for rhetorical and ornamental language, which now with a full stomach I find distasteful. I have modified the grosser passages but have not obliterated them because they are an essential part of the book.<sup>4</sup>

The temperament revealed in this passage seems one unlikely to produce the full splendor of friendship, which in addition to being a rare achievement in itself is an important part of Brideshead's total effect.

The scenes of friendship's full presence in Book I of Brideshead have been pointed out in Chapter I of this study.<sup>5</sup> By keeping the dialogue in these scenes natural, free from both the self-analysis which becomes tiresome in so many of Huxley's young men, and emotional quoting, Waugh fashions a convincing blend of character and setting. Waugh's choice here of intimate personal details of dress and furniture for the revelation of emotion rivals Elizabeth Bowen's. The final effect is a feeling of simultaneous languor and excited anticipation, the special kind of happiness that is friendship's own.

Even those background details not intimately associated with either of the young men contribute to the atmosphere of their friendship. Despite the frequent occurrence of semicolons in Brideshead's sentence structure,<sup>6</sup> There is a strict economy operating in the choice of descriptive detail. Waugh has a feeling for both commonplace diction: "A sunless parlour where an old clock ticked," and for the unusual but precise word: "ashler."<sup>7</sup>

In the first flush of friendship Charles had realized "that to know and love one other human being is the root of all wisdom."<sup>8</sup> Twenty years and a variety of loves and desires do nothing to contradict this truth he learned through his friendship with Sebastian. However, an important distinction must be made: such a love is the "root" of wisdom, not the root, the blossom and the bole together. The failure to make this necessary distinction inevitably blights Charles and Sebastian's friendship.

Any friendship is built on "the accumulation of common experiences, private jokes, and private language,"<sup>9</sup> but if that friendship is to continue to flourish, it must not deliberately seek to exclude others. Unfortunately, Sebastian is convinced that love is exclusive. From the beginning of their friendship Sebastian is determined to keep Charles away from the Flyte family: "If they once got hold of you with their charm, they'd made you their friend, not mine, and I won't let them."<sup>10</sup>

Charles is content with Sebastian's explanation, but he is not allowed to enjoy his happiness for long. When Charles meets Bridey and Cordelia for the first time--on the day of the Agricultural Show at Brideshead--all the truly golden days of friendship are over, though neither young man realizes it. For a time at Oxford the conjurer's performance enacted by Anthony Blanche

keeps the young man from the consequences of their exclusiveness, but his departure signals the advance of intruding forces and their own withdrawal. It is at this time that Charles finally meets Lady Marchmain: "She accepted me as Sebastian's friend and sought to make me hers also, and in doing so, unwittingly struck at the roots of our friendship."<sup>11</sup>

Lady Marchmain is a part of the contrasting background which sets off the friendship of Charles and Sebastian. She is a complex, puzzling character. Is she, as Anthony Blanche suggests, a blood-sucking vampire, or, as Cara says: "A good and simple woman who has been loved in the wrong way,"<sup>12</sup> or, as Cordelia maintains, a saintly person who is not really a saint? Cara has never met Lady Marchmain; her judgment is based on her knowledge of Lord Marchmain. Anthony Blanche has only observed her at some distance; and even Cordelia, it must be granted, suffers from the natural lack of comprehension between different generations. Charles, too, suffers from the generation gap in his attempt to synthesize impressions of Lady Marchmain. He did not share her thoughts as he shared Sebastian's, Julia's, or even Cordelia's. The only significant comment Charles himself makes about Lady Marchmain is that she was impatient of all human relationships that fell short of intimacy. Perhaps this impatience is a violation of, or even a failure to comprehend, friendship.

While it is certain that Lady Marchmain's actions destroy the friendship of Charles and Sebastian, it is uncertain whether she knows her actions will have a destructive effect on Sebastian's friendship. Her actions reveal a mixture of hurt pride, concern for her children's happiness, failure to understand her children, and courtesy toward all, even strangers. Religiously her faith does not have the lucid humility of the Senior Mr. Crouchback's. When Bridey expressed a desire to enter the priesthood, her faith prevented overt

discouragement, but the world was too much with her to allow her to encourage him. She grieves with a mother's grief over Sebastian's unhappiness. Perhaps the worst of her grief lies in sensing that in some way she is partially responsible for his unhappiness, just as she was for her husband's; and the harder she tries to help, the more unhappiness results. Nevertheless, even if she has this sense of guilt, can she be asked to stop trying? There is nothing in her heritage, a heritage of sacrificial victims, to warrant surrender. Perhaps her harsh, yet heroic, family tradition, one impossible to fully commend or condemn, does lie behind her difficulties. She appears to have set up her idea of her brothers as an exclusive standard by which all men must be judged and inevitably found wanting. As Sebastian says to Charles: "Uncle Ned is the test, you know."<sup>13</sup>

Sebastian's view of his situation is half Arcadian and half Christian. As an Arcadian he wants to be allowed to remain in the sunshine of youth's Elysian fields beyond the pale of morality. As a Christian his awareness of guilt, his own and his father's, becomes something from which he wants to flee. His mother's suffering becomes the embodiment of his guilt. What distresses Sebastian most about the consequences of the debacle of "The Old Hundreth" is, as he says: "I know Mummy will make it seem she has to bear the whole brunt of the business."<sup>14</sup> It is this sense of guilt and responsibility which wins out, and from which he attempts to withdraw into drink. He is lost to the "world," but a victory for the Arcadian side of his nature would have been a more irremedial loss.

Waugh faces a difficult problem here. He does not try to avoid the difficulty; he confronts it squarely. Bridey expresses the traditional Catholic

view in his hope that Sebastian is a dipsomaniac and not a young man who "just got drunk deliberately when he liked and because he liked." Charles takes society's view and proposes to keep Sebastian to his occasional, deliberate, less physically harmful drunkenness. Bridey responds, "There's nothing wrong in being a physical wreck, you know." Charles, horrified at this rejoinder, accuses Bridey of reverting to religion, to which Bridey replies, "I never left it."<sup>15</sup> Charles's memory records that at the time he found Bridey's view of the situation repugnant. The danger Waugh runs is that the reader sympathizing with Charles, may find Bridey's representative Catholic view so distasteful that Catholicism would forfeit all further claims for sympathy. But if Waugh can carry the reader along with Charles from initial rejection to final acceptance of the Catholic view he will have achieved far more than had he avoided this difficulty.

At this stage in Sebastian's struggle, Charles's love is powerless. As with all human love, their ability to give to one another falters at times, but even in the moments of unwavering response, when Charles is able to affirm "Sebastian contra mundum,"<sup>16</sup> friendship is not enough.

There is a repetition of the inadequacy of exclusive friendship in Sebastian's relationship with Kurt. The Sebastian-Kurt relationship is a reworking of the relationship between Ambrose Silk and Hans, which Ambrose sets forth in "Monument to a Spartan" in Put Out More Flags. As is usual with Waugh the differences in the two cases are more important than the similarities. Ambrose's relationship is homosexual, and anti-Semitism plays an important part in the catastrophe. Hans, it is implied, is killed by his Storm Troop comrades. Sebastian's relationship, as has already been discussed, is not homosexual, and Kurt, unlike Hans, makes his own decision. He commits suicide.

This repetition of friendship's inadequacy in *Brideshead*, while more tragic in its consequences than the Sebastian-Charles relationship, is not nearly so emotionally effective. This is partially because the Sebastian-Kurt relationship occurs mostly "off-stage"; the narrator, Charles, is not personally concerned. Also, the promise of fulfillment does not compare with the golden Oxford days of the earlier friendship.

The intensity of the experience of friendship lost is concentrated in Book I and primarily in Sebastian. Charles has his moment of desolation when Sebastian leaves Oxford, but it is short-lived. Art is a distraction which soon absorbs his attention. The beauties of *Brideshead* itself, the flattering attempt to be suborned by Lady Marchmain--a woman who wears the age's leading poet, Sir Adrian Person, as a bauble on the bracelet of her charm--the beginnings of an awareness of Julia, have all combined to hinder Charles's concentrating on the plight of his friend. The contrast to Sebastian afforded by Charles's reaction is an additional virtue of the book. Sebastian, desolate among the splendors, and Charles, distracted by the golden apples, present a subtle but powerful illustration of the Preacher's judgment: "Vanity of vanities; all is vanity."

For Charles the failure of exclusive love is repeated in his relationship with Julia in Book II. A fascinating but difficult question in either life or fiction is why two particular people fall in love with each other. For Charles and Julia the answer is both simple and profound: "I knew what she meant."<sup>17</sup>

This knowing what each other means sets *Brideshead* apart from Waugh's earlier novels and from most of twentieth-century fiction, which seems to be

characterized by a lack of understanding between men and women. Anthony Powell and Elizabeth Bowen, writers whose novels possess at least some affinities with Waugh's, provide examples. It may be presumed that Nicholas Jenkins, the narrator of Powell's A Dance to the Music of Time, gets on tolerably well with his wife Isobel, but beyond that little is suggested. He remarks repeatedly on his inability to speak of one whom he loves, but the multitude of "love" relationships of friends and relatives, which he pictures for the reader, all reveal a basic lack of understanding. Even the most sensitive and perceptive characters, like Karen Michaelis and Max Ebhart in Elizabeth Bowen's The House in Paris, experience great difficulty in understanding one another. It appears that there is something in modern experience—at least as it is rendered in the pages of fiction—which makes the experience that Charles and Julia share a rare one.

In the first days of their love, aboard the storm-tossed ocean liner, the magic happens again and again. Charles understands Julia's sadness, her humility, and her softness. She understands the meaning of the roses Charles sends her, his mention of Sebastian as a forerunner, and his allusions to King Lear.

Both Charles and Julia are acutely aware of their mutual understanding because each of their marriages is thoroughly modern—devoid of any understanding beyond the merest surface acknowledgments. Why is it and what is it that they understand and Rex and Celia do not?

For Charles, Sebastian was a forerunner in several ways. Friendship's quiet delight in dwelling with provided Charles with a satisfaction whose depths only the contrast of ten succeeding empty years can reveal. Now Charles



needs far more to rouse him than the "thin bat's squeek of sexuality" he heard the first time he met Julia. His life with Celia has convinced him of the emptiness of just physical attraction. For Julia the years have brought patience and humility. Suffering, the reduction of her pride, and the death of her baby have endowed her with a "Haunting, magical sadness which spoke straight to the heart and struck silence; it was the completion of her beauty."<sup>18</sup> Joy and suffering have prepared them, shaped them, so that they might listen to each other.

Part of what they understand is a civilization. A portion of that civilization is the concern for beauty expressed through generations in the order and design of Brideshead itself. Julia is even able to mention religion to Charles, the most profound part of that civilization, the part which she herself had given up. It is part of her life's story, and in a sense it had become, in the clashes over Sebastian, part of Charles's story also. But at this time religion is in the background; it is not nearly as important to their relationship as is their common understanding of King Lear.<sup>19</sup>

It is perhaps a common attitude toward life and the best that life offers which forms the largest portion of their bond. Their attitude is one of acceptance and appreciation of the present moment and what it holds--a calm wonder at their good fortune in finding one another that approaches serenity. They need only compare Celia's brisk, but sly, manipulating and Rex's strained push for power to their own relationship to appreciate their good fortune.

The idyl lasts two years, then irresistibly the larger reality makes itself felt. The avalanche comes gradually in the form of responsibilities, pretenses of responsibilities, the threat of impending troubles, and the memory of past troubles. The seeds of future trouble can be seen in their very first

days of happiness together at Brideshead: "Why is it that love makes me hate the world? It's supposed to have quite the opposite effect. I feel as though all mankind, and God, too, were in a conspiracy against us." After two years Julia feels the need for permanence, for setting their lives in some sort of order. In response to Charles's, "What do you mean by 'peace'; if not this?", she responds, "So much more."<sup>20</sup>

During this idyllic time, so briefly yet so forcefully expressed, Charles cannot quite forget that he has a son (and possibly a daughter) whom he has deserted. He is a guilty participant in the break-down of marriage. His children will grow up incomplete, just as Sebastian, Julia, and Charles himself had. "We must keep it up, whatever it costs us, for the sake of the children,"<sup>21</sup> Celia had said, referring to spending Christmas together. The irony is unmistakable. It is arguable that a whole lifetime of "keeping it up" might benefit the children, but there is not much to be hoped for from a day or two each year. Charles is indeed guilty.

Charles's position is the reverse of the one he occupied in Book I. Then it was Sebastian who most strongly desired exclusiveness; now it is Charles. Charles is satisfied with Julia, almost completely, as their relationship exists. Only a thought, an impression, clouds his happiness: "Perhaps you and I are types and this sadness which sometimes falls between us springs from disappointment in our search, each straining through and beyond the other, snatching a glimpse now and then of the shadow which turns the corner always a pace or two ahead of us."<sup>22</sup>

Julia has much more than a glimpse of the shadow. From the time that Bridey's remark about her living in sin holds the mirror up to her soul, she has a constant sense of the pressure of Who is beyond. Julia is the chief

actor in the remainder of the drama. This is fitting since it is most probable that valid action will proceed from knowledge rather than from ignorance, and only Julia has the knowledge. Charles, still an outsider to the knowledge that comes from faith, is limited to reaction, the reaction of a man in the dark struggling to see:

An hour ago, I thought, in the black refuge in the box hedge, she wept her heart out for the death of her God; now she is discussing whether Beryl's children shall take the old smoking-room or the schoolroom for their own. I was all at sea.<sup>23</sup>

There is more to Julia than what just two years of love can reveal. An awareness of the richness and depth of her personality that only a lifetime of sharing would fully reveal, implied in the unwearied delight Charles finds in painting her, heightens the experience of loss that he must suffer. What Charles cannot fully comprehend about Julia is her sense of family. It seems to be generally true that people who never had such a sense (the portrayal of Charles's father explains why it was impossible for Charles to possess a sense of family) cannot comprehend the force with which it can operate in people who do possess it; in fact, the deprived tend to deny the reality of such a sense. Charles does well to develop something of a feeling for the larger family meaning of Brideshead. There is a hint of such a development in his words: "I had not forgotten Sebastian; every stone of the house had a memory of him."<sup>24</sup> He is being drawn out of his exclusive love towards something larger, more embracing, but as yet he does not know what that something is. Julia knows but continues to struggle against her knowledge.

To say that Waugh is presenting in Julia his view of the upper class is to be guilty of a serious error. The most important characteristics which mold the patterns of life are individual family, not class, characteristics. Celia

Mulcaster is from the same class as Julia; yet their most fundamental attitudes are worlds apart. Celia believes firmly "in the principle that things done on the sly are not really done at all." So she regards her adultery as "nothing. It was never anything. It's all over and forgotten." This is not Julia's way. Though Rex had resumed his relationship with Brenda Champion within two months of returning from his honeymoon, Julia had remained faithful to him for almost ten years. When she does become adulterous she regards herself as a "mug" and her actions as a "secret, vicious, disastrous escapade." There is no shifting or blotting out for Julia; she is the author of her sins, and on her their guilt must fall. When Charles suggests that her feeling of guilt is really just the result of barbarous pre-conditions, she responds as Sebastian did to a similar suggestion: "How I wish it was!"<sup>25</sup> She is wishing that the exclusive love she has with Charles were enough, but it is not enough. She realizes that the final effect of sin is total isolation, just as the final effect of real or true love is communion--with Cordelia, Mummy, Christ, and all His hal-lows, as well as with Charles. There is no in-between; a choice must be made.

Julia is closer than she realizes to her final decision. Bridey's words have shaken her to the foundations of her being, but instead of rage or the cold disdain the younger Julia would have felt towards a brother who attempted to thwart her desires, she expresses concern: "We mustn't leave poor Bridey on his engagement night."<sup>26</sup> Exclusiveness is breaking down under the pressure of family feeling.

Family feeling is ambivalent. If it is exclusive, as it is with Lord Marchmain and Lady Marchmain, it harms its possessor; but, if it is rooted in the Fatherhood of God, it becomes a medium of grace. At the time of her final decision Julia sees her situation as a choice between two goods or two loves.

Actually her choice is to love or not to love; given her religious faith, a choice of Charles over God would have ended in detestation, not love. That the immediate separation inherent in her choice may result in a final union is suggested in Charles's: "I hope your heart may break; but I do understand."<sup>27</sup>

At the time of her final decision Julia sees that what frequently has been considered the goal in life is finally inadequate. She acknowledges the necessity of a religious faith which is incompatible with a belief in the validity of a "just we two" human love relationship. In Julia's decision the novel leads up to a religious faith large enough to embrace all mankind, but it does not attempt to show how that faith informs in a positive way the lives of believers. This positive aspect of Christian faith as Waugh sees it is stated in Helena: "Couldn't the wall be at the limits of the world and all men, civilized and barbarian, have a share in The City?"<sup>28</sup> How and to what extent this goal can be realized in the middle of the twentieth century is left for Sword of Honour to indicate.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Coleman, "No Room for Hooper," 187.

<sup>2</sup>"This is my commandment, that you should love one another, as I have loved you. This is the greatest love a man can show, that he should lay down his life for his friends; and you, if you do all that I command you, are my friends." (John 15: 12-14 [Knox Version]).

<sup>3</sup>There is a question of whether or not Waugh felt constrained to modify Charles's unambiguously negative answer to Bridey's question if Sebastian's connection with Kurt was in any way vicious. The original version reads: "No. I'm sure not. It's simply a case of two waifs coming together" (p. 217).

The revised edition reads: "No. I'm not sure. It's simply a case of two waifs coming together" (p. 241). The revised edition is marred by a number of printer's errors. The transposition of "sure not" to "not sure" can be explained as a printer's error, especially since the remainder of the scene is exactly the same in both versions. However, it could conceivably be meant to indicate Charles's checking himself in his certainty. On the whole, the printer's error seems the more likely alternative.

<sup>4</sup>BR, 1960 edition, p. 9.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp. 29-30.

<sup>6</sup>Kermode, "Mr. Waugh's Cities," 68.

<sup>7</sup>BR, pp. 34, 24.

<sup>8</sup>BR, p. 45.

<sup>9</sup>Evelyn Waugh, Ronald Knox, (London: Chapman and Hall, 1959), p. 250.

<sup>10</sup>BR, p. 37.

<sup>11</sup>BR, p. 109.

<sup>12</sup>BR, p. 103.

<sup>13</sup>BR, p. 141.

<sup>14</sup>BR, p. 121.

<sup>15</sup>BR, pp. 163-64.

<sup>16</sup>BR, p. 144.

<sup>17</sup>BR, p. 253.

<sup>18</sup>BR, pp. 76, 239.

<sup>19</sup>The importance of Lear in their mutual understanding may indeed point toward the Christian resolution of Brideshead. See Robert B. Heilman's brilliant study of Lear (This Great Stage [Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1948], pp. 277-78 and n. 1, p. 331).

<sup>20</sup>BR, pp. 276-279.

<sup>21</sup>BR, p. 278.

<sup>22</sup>BR, p. 303.

<sup>23</sup>BR, p. 290.

<sup>24</sup>BR, p. 303.

<sup>25</sup>BR, pp. 231, 234, 238, 257, 290.

<sup>26</sup>BR, p. 289.

<sup>27</sup>BR, p. 341.

<sup>28</sup>Helena, p. 48.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE SUSTAINING POWER OF THE CATHOLIC FAITH

Thus far the thematic portion of this study has attempted to show that Waugh is successful in exposing the inadequacy of the following: society's values, withdrawal from society, attempts at self-fulfillment, and personal relationships which are exclusive. Before treating the adequate, sustaining response Waugh finds in commitment to the Catholic faith, the first portion of this chapter will examine the presentation of Communism as the only serious alternative to Catholicism open to Western man to appear in Waugh's novels.

Socialists and radicals of various casts flit around the periphery of several of the earlier novels as silly or macabre figures of fun. In Scoop the sinister Dr. Benito is prevented from establishing the Soviet Union of Ishmaelia by the eleventh-hour intervention of Mr. Baldwin and a gigantic, drunken Swede. In Put Out More Flags the radicals are mouthers of second-hand opinions, pseudo-artists who parrot Moscow's pronouncements and endlessly debate whether or not the poets Parsnip and Pimpernell were being "contemporary"<sup>1</sup> when they deserted England on the eve of war.

In Brideshead there is little mention of anything which even smacks of Communism. There is one brief allusion to "proletarian scholars who scrambled fiercely for facts"<sup>2</sup> during Ryder's Oxford Days. The General Strike of 1926, a subject which could possibly have called forth some mention of Communism is



handled farcically--a tempest in a tea pot. The counter-revolutionary poseur, Jean de Brissac la Motte, is the only casualty of the Strike known to Ryder; he "had a pot of ferns dropped on his head by an elderly widow in Camden Town and was in hospital for a week."<sup>3</sup>

It is to Sword of Honour with its picture of the Western world emerging from World War II that one must turn for Waugh's serious presentation of Communism. That Waugh should treat Communism seriously as an alternative to Catholicism is not completely surprising considering a statement he made about Ruskin:

He was brilliantly devoid of snobbery, ingenuously ignorant, so that he came fresh to anything ready to be swept up or rebuffed by the mood of the moment, quite content to join Tintoretto and Mulready and Kate Greenway in the same circle of felicity, stubbing his toe hard when he came on Catholicism or Marxism or any of the solid elements of his century.<sup>4</sup>

Just as Communism historically emerged from World War II as a power in contention for domination of the world socio-political scene--a power which before the war had been but lightly regarded in many quarters--so, too, the importance of Communism and the presence of Communists are developing elements in Sword of Honour.

During the first stage of Guy's pilgrimage the Russians, linked in Guy's mind with the Nazis as the Modern Age in arms, are labeled public villains by the newspapers for their way with Finland:

English forces, delayed only by a few diplomatic complications, were on their way to help. Russian might had proved to be an illusion. Mannerheim held the place in English hearts won in 1914 by King Albert of the Belgians.

The measure of British unconcern is perhaps indicated by Halberdier reaction to the fall of Finland: "No one at Kut-al-Imara House seemed much put out by

the disaster." The only comment recorded is Apthorpe's: "I've other things to worry about."<sup>5</sup> What he is worrying about in this instance is his thunderbox.

At the beginning of the second stage of Guy's pilgrimage, British Communists are still regarded as something of a joke; however, there is a foreshadowing of darker things to come within the joke. The first direct reference is to "Hazardous Offensive Operations Headquarters, that bizarre product of total war which later was to proliferate through five acres of valuable London property, engrossing the simple high staff officers of all the Services with experts, charlatans, plain lunatics, and every unemployed member of the British Communist Party."<sup>6</sup> At this time, however, H.O.O.H.Q., the toy of General Whale, greatly resembles the Ministry of Information, which sheltered such diversely humorous talents as those provided by Basil Seal, Ambrose Silk, Mr. Bentley, and Colonel Plum in Put Out More Flags, so the shadow cast is not a very dark one.

The next bit of foreshadowing occurs when Ian Kilbannock shows up at the Island of Mugg, where Guy had been training with Tommy Blackhouse's Commando. The titled Ian has already proved himself a great snob in his treatment of Air Marshall Beech, the man who first gave Ian military preferment. However, Ian tells Guy that there is a democratic side to his character, which he shows to his fellow journalists. Later in the day, having become "pprophetically drunk," Ian proclaims: "This is a People's War, . . . and the People won't have poetry and they won't have flowers. . . . We want heroes of the People, to or for the people, by, with and from the People."<sup>7</sup>

On June 22, 1941--"a day of apocalypse for all the world for numberless generations"<sup>8</sup>--Germany invades Russia. For Guy, convalescing from his escape

from Crete in an open boat, this event signals the great betrayal: justice and oppression, innocence and guilt, become hopelessly mingled. When Guy returns to England shortly thereafter, he discovers a change in attitude has taken place. His first encounter with public opinion, delivered by Arthur Box-Bender and Mr. Elderberry, reveals to Guy the popular enthusiasm for Russia and her role in the war.

During the two years which elapse between the end of stage two and the beginning of the final stage of Guy's pilgrimage, years which see the tide of war turn, Communist influence grows with the success of Allied arms. In the final stage of Guy's pilgrimage, people at H.O.O.H.Q. screen all personnel sent on special missions to insure that they fit in with Communist plans. Those nameless and faceless Party members who scurried for jobs at the beginning of the war--at the time apparently a clownish group--have worked, wormed, or waited their way into positions of importance. The Halberdier major's prediction about the "shits"<sup>9</sup> getting to the top has come true. Even the High Command is persuaded to abandon sworn allies and to back Communist-sponsored candidates for power all over the globe.

Historically these things did happen, but how and why did they happen? The fictional way Waugh has chosen to explain the "how" and "why" of the historical fact is to present a number of characters, differing in many respects, who are Communists and in their speech and actions suggest Communism's appeal.

Gilpin, a former schoolteacher, is the least attractive personality among the Communists. In addition to hypocrisy, a trait common to several of Waugh's schoolteachers (Dr. Fagan and Mr. Samgrass), Gilpin is surly, boastful, a physical coward, officious, and intellectually inferior. He delights in the

oppressive exercise of authority, especially over those who he knows are more intelligent and courageous than himself. This is evident in his dressing down of Frank de Souza for being too familiar with Guy. For him Communism offers the possibility of authority over his intellectual and moral betters. His most horrible characteristic is his total lack of compassion. Without having any reliable basis from which to infer guilt, he relishes the fact that the Kanyis, the Jewish couple whom Guy has tried to help, have been executed: "They were tried by a People's Court. You may be sure justice was done."<sup>10</sup>

Gilpin's statement is, perhaps, the most bitter irony in Waugh's fiction. Justice has been perverted, not effected, and the perversion seems more terrible than any past injustice because it is inflicted by common men in the name of the People.<sup>11</sup> The thought is expressed directly in one of Waugh's non-fictional statements:

Could Chesterton have written like that [with poetic and romantic smugness of the virtue of the common man] today, if he had lived to see the Common Man in arms, drab, gray and brown, the Storm Troopers and the Partisans, standard bearers of the great popular movements of the century; had he lived to read in the evidence of the War Trials the sickening accumulation of brutality inflicted and condoned by common men, and seen, impassive on the bench, the agents of other criminals, vile, but free and triumphant.<sup>12</sup>

A Communist who is decidedly not one of the People is Sir Ralph Brompton. He is unique in the gallery of Waugh's homosexuals, who hitherto have been silly, humorous, or aesthetic. Sir Ralph has none of the obvious mannerisms of the homosexual, and he is not aesthetic. He does, however, have his hand in all the unsavory political matters that are being cooked up beneath cabinet rank. It appears to be historically correct that Communism has always found adherents among the upper classes, but it is difficult to ascribe any rational motive to Sir Ralph's Communism. It can hardly be thwarted ambition: he had

risen to ambassadorial rank in the Diplomatic Service. Still less is it likely to be a commitment to Marxist principles: a triumph of Marxist principles would deprive him of the "devoted servants" he had never lacked and the special little creature comforts, the half-pound of "Lapsang Suchong" tea which he manages to secure for himself. The only "privileged" glimpse which the author has seen fit to give us, beneath Sir Ralph's exterior, reveals him "gazing at Guy through his single eyeglass, without animosity seeing him with his back to a wall, facing a firing squad."<sup>13</sup> It is almost as if his perversion includes a delight in destruction for its own sake. He would be a more familiar character in a Graham Greene or a Georges Bernanos novel, where evil stands forth naked and puissant.<sup>14</sup>

Joe Cattermole's motivation, on the other hand, is easy to understand. It is through him that Waugh first presents the real strength of Communism's appeal. For Cattermole Communism is a religious enthusiasm. He is described physically in terms appropriate to a mystic: "Tall, stooping, emaciated, totally unsoldierly, a Zurbaran ascetic with a joyous smile." Another characteristic he shares with religious mystics is his total dedication, his desire to burn himself out in service: "Always ready to stand in and take extra duty."<sup>15</sup>

There is no doubting the sincerity of Joe Cattermole's dedication and his "enthusiasm," but from the start suspicion is cast on the integrity and honesty of his goal. His first personal remarks with Guy bespeak an energetic, open, even humble disposition; but when he begins to talk business, he becomes devious: "'The position is fluid,' he said, a curious official insincerity masking his easier, early manner."<sup>16</sup> He delivers set lectures which prove to

be patent deceptions. After telling Guy that there must be no politics in wartime, he steps into Brigadier Cape's office and, on political grounds, defends spying and murder.

The difference between the reality and Cattermole's vision of it is beautifully played out in a speech he makes to Guy about the partisans, a speech couched in religious language. He calls the partisans a "revelation--literally." Girl partisans share a blanket with their male comrades "out in absolute celibacy." Sex has been sublimated to "patriotic passion." Girl partisans have "ceased to menstruate." These girls break into song while undergoing excruciating operations without anesthetics, "in order to prove their manhood."<sup>17</sup>

There is all the material of saints' legends here. The overcoming of the sexual drive and the singing under torture, for example, can be found in Chaucer's story of St. Cecilia, which he took from The Golden Legend. Waugh is at his wriest in this passage. Cattermole had said: "I have seen spectacles of courage of which I should have been sceptical in the best authenticated classical text."<sup>18</sup> Is it not probable that he is referring to the lives of the saints as found in Greek and Latin writers?

There is an essential difference between St. Cecilia and the partisan girl, a distinction of which Joe Cattermole is apparently ignorant: the object of devotion which gives the word "manhood" its meaning. For St. Cecilia "manhood" or the condition of being most fully human--a qualitative matter--exists most completely in union with God, so that in uniting herself with Him she is completing her own humanity.<sup>19</sup> It is difficult to see what Communism offers, besides mere quantity, an addition of more units just like herself, to complete the partisan girl. An indication of the validity of each course of action

might lie in the fact that the partisan girls cease menstruating. They deny their nature as women, while St. Cecilia manages her triumphs without relinquishing her womanhood. If anything, in Chaucer's version at least, St. Cecilia is excessively feminine.

The narrative comment preceding Cattermole's description of the partisan girls reads:

When Major Cattermole spoke of the enemy he did so with the impersonal, professional hostility with which a surgeon might regard a malignant, operable growth; when he spoke of his comrades in arms, it was something keener than loyalty, equally impersonal, a counterfeit almost of mystical love as portrayed by the sensual artists of the high baroque.

Following his description of the partisan girls the narrative comment is:

Seven years previously J. Cattermole of All Souls had published An Examination of Certain Redundances in Empirical Concepts; a work popularly known as "Cattermole's Redundances" and often described as "seminal." Since then he had been transformed.<sup>20</sup>

The exquisite joke, so typical of Waugh, is that the author of this "seminal" work has himself become enchanted and enslaved by the greatest empirical excess of recent times. Communism, a doctrine claiming to deal with the here and now, has elicited in Cattermole a mystical faith in the beyond.<sup>21</sup>

If Joe Cattermole presents Communism's appeal on the most exalted level, the most appealing character to be ensnared by Communism is Frank de Souza. He is the only Communist to appear in all three stages of Guy's pilgrimage; whether or not he is a Communist during all this time is questionable, a situation that makes him the best subject for studying Communism's power of attraction. Just down from Cambridge when he joins the Halberdiers at the start of the war, he possesses several of the attractive qualities common to many of Waugh's more sympathetic characters. Besides being literate, he has a

wildly inventive imagination and is adept at the humorous use of quotations. His humor runs to the macabre and the cynical, but the cynicism is lightened by self-mockery and a sense that things are finally funnier than they are sad. For all his joking he has a serious side (some of his darker jokes, he tells us, are an attempt at cheering himself up). There is nothing of Hooper or Trimmer in him; he is dependable and efficient. Finally, he is courageous, with a basic honesty which recognizes and admits the limits of his courage.

In most of the scenes in which de Souza appears, what is most striking about him is his keen sense of humor. Perhaps his finest moment comes during the bloody rear-guard action in Crete. He has lost a piece of his ear in the fighting but has kept a piece of his humor. When Guy informs him that the Halberdiers will be "retiring" at midnight, Frank answers: "'Retiring' is good. It sounds like a maiden aunt going to bed."<sup>22</sup>

During the fourth year of the war, for reasons which are not detailed, Frank de Souza becomes committed to Communism. The changes wrought in him by this course of action become apparent to Guy when their paths cross again in Croatia during the final stages of the war. Only the smallest flicker of Frank's humor remains.

The change in Frank is most evident in a brief dialogue following Guy's visit to a Croatian priest to have a Mass said for the repose of Virginia's soul. As a result of this visit Guy and the priest are in trouble with the partisans, who suspect political intrigue:

"Don't for goodness' sake try anything like that again. As I said yesterday, this is no time for sectarian loyalties."

"You wouldn't call communism a sect?"

"No," said de Souza. He began to say more and then stopped. All he did was to repeat "No" with absolute assurance.<sup>23</sup>



De Souza has "absolute assurance" in a belief which without compunction deceives its allies and, like the Nazism it condemns, executes innocent Jews. Ironically, it is Guy who is concerned for the welfare of the Jewish refugees, while Frank, who is Jewish himself, refuses to think about them. When it comes to Communism, Frank has lost not only his sense of humor but also his sense of family. This double loss is the essence of the final impression left by Frank de Souza: a sense of waste. No doubt Communism will make demands on Frank's proven courage, and it may provide a partial substitute for a family, but the Party apparently does not have much use for Frank's highly developed sense of humor. In fact, like a monk renouncing the pleasures of the flesh, Frank seems to have renounced humor. Humor has been his finest quality, a quality which ranks high in the order of human perfections. Frank could and should have been a much finer human being had his sense of humor been encouraged and given proper scope for its operation--the smallness of man in comparison with the infinitude of God--but the consequences of his choice leave him greatly reduced.

Both the appeal and the final inadequacy of Communism seen in Joe Cattermole and Frank de Souza serve as foils to the satisfaction and sustaining power of Catholicism. In order to see more clearly the contrast afforded by Catholicism as it operates in the mature novels, it is first necessary to correct two mistaken notions that have been advanced by critics concerning the character of Catholicism in Waugh's fiction: (1) that the Church is an exclusive club which reflects Waugh's social snobbery;<sup>24</sup> (2) that Waugh's particular kind of Catholicism is anti-mystical.<sup>25</sup>

The first of these notions is the more serious error. Waugh himself, in reviewing The End of the Affair, warns Graham Greene about almost the same pitfall:

It would be a pity if he gave an impression of the Catholic Church as a secret society, as Mr. T. S. Eliot did of his Church in The Cocktail Party. Clearly that is not Mr. Greene's intention, nor can it be justly read into his words, but in the dark places where his apostolate lies I can imagine some passages carrying a whiff of occultism.<sup>26</sup>

Should the objection arise that what is present here is an example of a man being most attuned to his own faults as they appear in others, a glance at the list of characters in Waugh's novels who are Catholics should be enough to silence the objection.

In Brideshead, besides the Marchmain family, Charles Ryder, Nanny Hawkins, Anthony Blanche, Mrs. Muspratt, Father Graves, and Father Mackay are Catholics. It is difficult to imagine any of these people except the Marchmains and Ryder being accepted as social equals by the members of Brat's or Bellamy's Club.

In Sword of Honour the list of Catholics is even more extensive. In addition to the Crouchback family and Ambrose Goodall, all of whom might serve a social snobbery charge, there are: Father Whelen, an Irish priest who wants to pad the rolls of the Catholic Halberdiers in order to receive an increased government subsidy; a priest to whom Guy confesses in Alexandria, who is probably a German spy; an Italian priest in Bari, who asks for cigarettes from his penitents in the confessional; an old Croatian priest, a sad, rather than an unpleasant, person, who accedes to Guy's request for a Mass because of a Mass offering of food; a Goanese steward; a nameless young soldier lying dead in Crete; and a Halberdier trainee from the Depot named Hemp, who does not attend Mass, claiming to have read somewhere that service men were dispensed from their obligation. This is hardly a group one would identify with an aristocratic social club.

Since Helena is in one sense an "historical" novel--its action occurs in a period of history prior to our own--it is possible for the author to make statements whose directness would probably be offensive in a work with a contemporary setting. This is an advantage which helps to compensate for the loss of immediacy and the fullness of verisimilitude. The narrative comment on Helena's attendance at Mass during her first visit to Rome gives Waugh's most explicit comment on the catholicity of the Church.

The intimate family circle of which she was a member bore no mark of kinship. The barrow-man grilling his garlic sausages in the gutter, the fuller behind his reeking public pots, the lawyer or the lawyer's clerk, might each and all be one with the Empress Dowager in the Mystical Body.<sup>27</sup>

The second notion, Waugh's "anti-mysticism," is not so erroneous, but it does require qualification if readers are not to be misled into thinking that in his novels he attempts to prove rationally or scientifically the validity of Catholicism and all its claims. Waugh espouses the traditional Christian view of the supernatural character of faith. In a review of Graham Greene's The Heart of the Matter, after asking "whether nowadays logical rule of thumb Catholics are not a little too humble towards the mystics," Waugh states: "In fact, our whole Faith is essentially mystical." After affirming this essential mysticism of Catholicism, however, he hastens to add: "We may well fight shy of discussing ecstatic states of prayer with which we have no acquaintance."<sup>28</sup>

The concept of "mysticism" is being used in two ways: first, in the general sense in which all Catholics in communion with the Church are mystics, since they are members, through their act of faith in baptism, of the Mystical Body of Christ; and second, in a more restricted sense limited to those whose experience of God is unusually direct, powerful, and persistent. Waugh's position is that the experience described in the second of these meanings is so

rare, especially in our times, that it is unlikely (for Waugh at least) to form the basis for art. The experience indicated in the first meaning, however, is common enough to provide a congenial subject for fiction.

Having said something of what, for Waugh, Catholicism is not, we must discover what the nature and quality of Catholicism is and how this Catholicism functions in the novels. This is a task essential to this entire study, since, if the body of Waugh's fiction is to have integrity and if the mature novels are to be judged an advance over the earlier works, Catholicism, which in the significant addition in the mature novels, must be seen as the culminating and integrating factor operative in the novels.

One method of undertaking a search is to begin where one is. Where one is in this case is the basic view one holds of man. The two following statements--the first from Waugh's autobiography and the second from Helena--illustrate Waugh's basic view: "To have been born into a world of beauty, to die amid ugliness, is the common fate of all us exiles"<sup>29</sup>; "The strong questing will had found its object; the exile her home."<sup>30</sup> While both the concept of decay and that of the quest are vitally important, the essential element is that man is an exile--he is not at home in this world. The decay attested to in the first statement offers no proof of the validity of faith, but its basis in the universal entropy formulated in the laws of thermodynamics points to the necessity of the supernatural if life is to have any lasting meaning. Quest becomes imperative, if despair is to be avoided, once one becomes aware that one is, in fact, an exile who cannot be at home here. If one is aware of exile, of always having been an exile, the quest is for news of home: where one came from, who one is, and what one must do to arrive home where one at-

tains peace.

To show that man, as he appears in Waugh's fiction, is, in fact, an exile has been the burden of Chapters V through VIII of this study. Three critics with varying degrees of perception or imperception have responded to the experience of exile. John Coleman, the most imperceptive, writes: "It is not easy for a non-believer to give any value to this Divine 'twitch of the thread' that recalls the Marchmains from pagan happiness to their first allegiance."<sup>31</sup> Just slightly less imperceptive, Stephen Spender writes: "The plan of marriage in Brideshead Revisited looks very like a trap sprung by God to prevent people who love one another from marrying."<sup>32</sup> More perceptively Frank Kermode writes: "Mr. Waugh is always emphatic that his reasonable religion has nothing to do with making or keeping people in the ordinary sense happy."<sup>33</sup> The whole point is that to an exile who is aware of his exile the ordinary sense of happy is not happy at all, but may even be despair. As Helena says: "If people only knew what they wanted."<sup>34</sup>

If the exile is to be happy he must be given news of his real home. The news the Church brings to the exile is "that God exists and that He made you and loves you and that He made the world so that you might enjoy its beauty and that He himself is your final end and happiness, that he loved you so much that He sent His only Son to die for you and to found His Holy Catholic Church so that you may enter heaven and there see God face to face and be happy with Him forever."<sup>35</sup> Since news is not knowledge and cannot be figured out by oneself, a newsbearer is required, one who is sober and of good faith. If this news is what the exile has been waiting to hear, and if the newsbearer is sober and a person of good faith, then, by the grace of God, the exile will believe

the newsbearer and be happy in an extraordinary way.<sup>36</sup>

This good news brought by the trustworthy newsbearer is the essence of the Catholic faith. An essential characteristic of that faith as it appears in Waugh's fiction is that it is familial--a family united in love. That a familial faith is most appropriate to the novels has, perhaps, been suggested already in words "home" and "exile" quoted from Helena and in Guy's foil, Frank de Souza, having lost his sense of family. Before examining Waugh's family of faith in more detail, it is first necessary, since the family is united in love, to give a working definition or description of the word "love"--a word used in so many different, even contradictory, ways.<sup>37</sup>

Love is a wishing well for, a desiring the greatest happiness of, the beloved; it delights to know fully, to dwell with, and to do the will of the beloved; and should the greatest happiness of the beloved and the delight of dwelling with the beloved be in irreconcilable conflict, love is willing to sacrifice its own delight for the happiness of the beloved. Love's activity, its choice, must be both free and responsible--there can be no real freedom without responsibility.<sup>38</sup> These principles are valid for love of self, parent, child, brother, sister, friend, or marriage partner. The exile who is fortunate enough to have become a man of faith is aware that for himself and all other exiles God is the fullness of freedom, love, and delight; through Him, with Him, and in Him there can be no conflict between dwelling with and happiness. All exiles, separated here even in their moments of closest intimacy, at home in their Father's house become as one while each realizes himself in his uniqueness.

A reliable newsbearer brings the good news; an exile hears the news and

believes, and a family of faith, united in love, is created. How does this familial faith operate in the novels? Is it integral to each of them and to the whole novelistic achievement?

The early novels concern themselves only with portraying the condition of exile, and in doing so prepare the way for awareness and receptivity, but no news of home is brought in these novels.

In Waugh's fiction a full rendering of love first occurs in Brideshead. It is appropriate, therefore, that Brideshead is his first novel in which news of home is brought to an exile, and that the news bearing and hearing takes place in the context of a family.

On the surface the families in Brideshead appear to be a continuation of the picture of disintegration apparent in all the novels from Decline and Fall through Put Out More Flags. As in so much fiction from the nineteenth century to the present, fathers are deficient. Like all his other responsibilities Lord Marchmain has abdicated his duties as father, and Mr. Ryder is the most antipathetic figure of all Waugh's elder eccentrics. There is, however, a Father who does not fail in his love, One always eager to welcome home the prodigal child.

The welcoming home of the prodigal is one aspect of the familial character of faith emphasized in Brideshead. Lord Marchmain, Sebastian, and Julia, all members of the family of the Faith, are all prodigal children. Their prodigality stems from their misuse and/or misunderstanding of freedom. To all of them freedom has come to mean the ability to do that which apparently will give them most immediate pleasure. When this happens they cease to shape their lives by faith. This abuse or misconception of freedom results, before their

re-conversions, in Sebastian's alcoholism, Julia's sadness and fear of time, and Lord Marchmain's self-hatred and thinly-veiled malice. John Coleman's statement about "pagan happiness" quoted above is not merely imperceptive; it is grossly inaccurate. Both Sebastian and Lord Marchmain are thoroughly unhappy and Julia is troubled and anxious before the thread of faith is twitched.

A factor contributing to the re-conversion of the three prodigals is the presence and persistence of faithful children of God in the Marchmain family. This factor is acknowledged by Julia both during her outburst on sin in the extended reference to her sin's effect on her mother, and when she finally recognizes that she cannot shut herself out from God's mercy:

Why should I be allowed to understand that, and not you, Charles? It may be because of Mummy, Nanny, Cordelia, Sebastian--perhaps Bridey and Mrs. Muspratt--keeping my name in their prayers.<sup>39</sup>

The Marchmain family is complete in faith, as it is incomplete in the natural order.

A small point, but one with some relevance in this matter, is the inclusion of Mrs. Muspratt in Julia's list. Though legally a part of the Marchmain family through her marriage to Bridey, she is not accepted as such. Julia finds her somewhat offensive, personally, and Lord Marchmain finds her "deplorable,"<sup>40</sup> so much so, in fact, that he alters his will, leaving the Brideshead estate to Julia instead of Bridey. In these circumstances, Julia's mentioning her is striking evidence of the durability and all-inclusiveness of the familial character of faith.

Perhaps the most striking piece of evidence attesting to the familial character of faith is the death-bed repentance of Lord Marchmain. To the non-believer this repentance is likely to seem improbable or incredible, but to the



believer (Catholic, Protestant, or Jew) who is aware of the familial character of faith and has seen it operating throughout the novel, the repentance is highly probable.

A disordered pride of family is very strong in Lord Marchmain. It is disordered because it is concentrated on the merely natural level, the worldly achievements of his family. Cordelia had said of him in introducing the "twitch upon the thread" theme:

"Do you know what Papa said when he became a Catholic? Mummy told me once. He said to her: 'You have brought back my family to the faith of their ancestors.' Pompous, you know."

Family pride is his dominant concern during the final months of his life. It fills the monologue he whispers during the weeks when he struggles vainly against death. But among his ramblings on the earthly splendor of his family there are echoes, faint memories, of something beyond: "The tombs in the old church and the chantry where no clerk sings"; "We were knights then, barons since Agincourt."<sup>41</sup> His sense of family is not limited entirely to the natural. Also, he has the same people praying for him as those Julia mentions, and perhaps even Julia too. Why should the prayers of his family not be answered? His self-hatred and malice would have to be enormous. The very devotion of his daughters would tend to counter his self-hatred; the bond, both of nature and of supernatural faith completing nature,--which they affirm is not to be weighed lightly.

This study has made several references to the pressure King Lear exerts on Waugh's work, a matter recognized by at least one other recent critic of Waugh's.<sup>42</sup> Lord Marchmain's death and the attendant circumstances proffer another example of the Lear influence--an important one. One of the elemental conflicts in Lear, one influencing all the other major thematic strains in the

play, is over the nature of nature, especially human nature. Is nature a matter of survival of the fittest and gratification of impulse, as Edmund suggests in his soliloquy (I, ii. 1-22), or is it a bond of mutual dependence, as Lear maintains (II, iv. 180-82)? The play demonstrates the truth and necessity of Lear's view; the same may be said for Brideshead.

Like Lear, Lord Marchmain abdicated responsibility and was guilty of a serious lack of self-knowledge. Also like Lear, he has a daughter, also named Cordelia, who in grave circumstances is not afraid to tell him the truth. Fighting for life, recounting his life aloud, Lord Marchmain asks if deserting his wife in the name of "freedom" was a crime. Normal worldly prudence in this situation would advocate soothing him, cheering him up. Cordelia responds: "I think it was, Papa."<sup>43</sup> In his need, both of Lord Marchmain's daughters confirm the family bond; it is Julia, his favorite, who makes the final decision to send once more for the priest. Filial piety prepares the way for divine grace.

As has been noted in Chapter VIII of this study,<sup>44</sup> direct reference to King Lear provides a bond of understanding between Charles and Julia. This bond, in turn, indicates a second essential characteristic of Catholicism: its particularity. The bearer of the good news is a particular person, and the exile who hears the news is a particular person. Just as it is through the mutual love of a particular man and a particular woman that a family comes into being, so too the family of faith is built by particular relationships.

Through his friendship with Sebastian, Charles was able, while still at Oxford, to realize that: "To know and love one other human being is the root of all wisdom."<sup>45</sup> Though unaware at the time, Charles was preparing himself to receive the news which promises the completion of wisdom--the Holy

Wisdom of Charity. How closely Charles's position coincides with the traditional Catholic view can be seen in the following remarks about Dante, the most Catholic of poets:

This character, which has also been called the "scandal" of particularity, stamped upon Christianity, is of its very essence, and governs all the imagery of its poets. Because of it, Dante's encounter with an individual living woman can be made the image of the soul's encounter with a personal living God. The Infinite came once into the finite as a single and particular Person; the company of His elect is made up of single and particular persons, each having single and particular relations with Himself, and with each other. If we try to efface from the Christian revelation the brand of singularity, then what we shall have left is not Christianity at all.<sup>46</sup>

Charles's idea that all present loves are forerunners of a love which is beyond is itself Dantesque. Human love, the experience most like Divine love, is, in Brideshead as well as in the Commedia, the path to God. As Beatrice, preceded by Virgil, is the God-bearer to Dante, so Julia, preceded by Sebastian, is the God-bearer to Charles. However, the manner of the bearing in each case is as different as the two ages in which the actions take place.

Before the Faith can be affirmed, there must first be an awareness of the possibility of a wholly satisfying, completely fulfilling relationship. Such is the promise of Beatrice as seen by Dante and Julia as seen by Charles. "I never tired of painting her, forever finding in her new wealth and delicacy,"<sup>47</sup> Charles says of Julia. The love of Charles and Julia anticipates, if imperfectly, what St. Augustine writes about the love of God in Book X of his Confessions:

And yet, when I love him, it is true that I love a light of a certain kind, a voice, a perfume, a food, an embrace; but they are of the kind that I love in my inner self, when my soul is bathed in light that is not bound by space; when it listens to sound that never dies away; when it breathes fragrance that is not borne away on the wind; when it tastes food that is never

consumed by the eating; when it clings to an embrace from which it is not severed by fulfillment of desire. This is what I love when I love my God.<sup>48</sup>

But in the very moment when Charles experiences boundless delight in her presence, Julia, seeing deeper into the ultimate implications of their relationship, is dissatisfied. To Charles's query of what more can peace be than what they already have, Julia responds: "So much more."<sup>49</sup>

It is through her suffering and anguish, pressed upon Julia by the growing awareness of the consequences of her self-imposed exile, that she brings the news of home to Charles. Implied in Julia's "so much more" is her need for permanence. In also recognizing that "marriage isn't a thing we can take when the impulse moves us,"<sup>50</sup> she is recognizing, partially at least, the responsibility inherent in free choice. During the year which follows her uttering of these words, culminating in Lord Marchmain's death, she struggles with the growing pressure of permanence, responsibility, and completion---in short, her need for God.

That Charles, in and through his love for her, is more aware of her struggle than she is herself, is shown in their final conversation:

"You knew?"

"Since this morning; since before this morning; all this year."

"I didn't know till today. Oh, my dear, if you could only understand. Then I could bear to part, or bear it better. I should say my heart was breaking, if I believed in broken hearts. I can't marry you, Charles; I can't be with you ever again."

"I know."

"How can you know?"<sup>51</sup>

Charles knows because he fought all year to keep Julia. Their bond of understanding persists. The lover is more attuned to the beloved than to himself, for the lover exists most fully in the beloved. For a year Charles fought against the Lover who was pressing His claim on Julia, and through the fight,

as it frequently happens in an intense and protracted honorable contest, Charles comes to know, respect, and finally love his Opponent.

In this final love, which is not a forerunner for another love and which includes all other real loves, Charles has received the news of home--a far better home than even Brideshead at its best had promised to be. In reviewing the final stages of the events which led up to his reception of the news (the reception itself is not presented), a third characteristic of faith is made apparent: its two-fold aspect of rejection and affirmation. The old life, however sweet it is in part, is rejected, because its incompleteness is finally bitter. The new life, however bitter it is in part, is affirmed, because its sweetness is complete and wholly satisfying.

In the epilogue Charles visits the reopened chapel at Brideshead and reflects on the sanctuary lamp that its "flame burns again for other soldiers, far from home, farther, in heart, than Acre or Jerusalem." Though far from home, there is a home for Charles and the other soldiers, symbolized in the lamp. The book's concluding sentence, addressed to Ryder, is, appropriately: "'You're looking unusually cheerful to-day,' said the second-in-command."<sup>52</sup>

Brideshead is a novel of affirmation. It presents the possibility of news of home and affirms the reception of the news. It concludes in faith, and in Ryder's cheerfulness there is the suggestion that faith is sustaining. But faith is not an end in itself; the end of faith is charity--the doing as well as the hearing of the word. The handling of this subject--representing an advance beyond Brideshead--is reserved for Sword of Honour.

Between Brideshead (1944) and Men at Arms (1952), the first volume of what was to become Sword of Honour, Waugh wrote two slender works, Scott-King's

Modern Europe (1949) and The Loved One (1948), and one major work, Helena (1950). Scott-King and The Loved One are not directly concerned with Christianity. They are written much in the early satirical manner and are neither as brightly entertaining as Decline and Fall or Scoop nor as profoundly satirical as A Handful of Dust. They are the least of Waugh's novels, if they can be regarded as novels at all. The reasons for not considering Helena one of his mature novels have been advanced in the preface to this study,<sup>53</sup> but it is, despite the difficulty of classifying it, an important work. It contains an almost unbelievable wealth of religious humor, showing that Waugh's Catholicism differs greatly in this respect from Frank de Souza's Communism. One can imagine many a dreadfully earnest post-councillior Catholic (lay or religious), who writes what he believes are daringly new and revolutionary articles for the weekly or monthly journals, gnashing his teeth in anger and frustration on reading Helena. The main thrust of religious affirmation, however, still rests on the necessity of faith. What is added to the position as it appears in Brideshead is an emphasis on the historical character of Christianity. Helena, in questioning Marcius about his Gnosticism, asks: "When and where did all this happen? And how do you know?"<sup>54</sup> Unlike other spiritual religions, Christianity has definite, concrete answers to these fundamental questions.<sup>55</sup> Helena's search for the true cross is an underscoring of the historical character of Christianity.

Sword of Honour is primarily Guy Crouchback's story, and the heart of his story is what happens to the "few dry grains of faith" he possesses at the story's outset. Guy's situation is, in one most important aspect, antithetical to Sebastian's and Charles's: he is the product of a family united in love.

Guy's father is a model and a guide; in him we see the richness and strength of Waugh's familial conception of faith. The mid-twentieth century is characterized by its fragmented view of life, so, unlike "Dante," Guy does not have his guide with him every step of his way. The power of his example and his prayers is felt sporadically, most frequently in slack moments after important events, when Guy has time to reflect.

If the end of faith is charity, the doing of the word, how is the charitable man recognized; what are his works? The great text describing charity is St. Paul's:

Charity is patient, is kind; charity feels no envy; charity is never perverse or proud, never insolent; does not claim its rights, cannot be provoked, does not brood over an injury; takes no pleasure in wrong, but rejoices at the victory of truth; sustains, believes, hopes, endures, to the last (I Cor. 13:4-7 [Knox V.]).

Mr. Crouchback, in the brief, widely spaced scenes in which he appears or is referred to, embodies almost every jot and tittle of St. Paul's description.

It is immediately following the mention of Guy's "dry grains of faith" that Mr. Crouchback makes his first appearance and the closeness of the father-son relationship is established: "Despite the forty years that divided them there was a marked likeness between Mr. Crouchback and Guy." Lest Mr. Crouchback be mistaken for one of his elderly eccentrics, Waugh hastens to add: "There was nothing of the old dandy about him, nothing crusted, nothing crotchety."<sup>56</sup> He is, instead, a present-day Job who has born without complaint or loss of humor the early death of a beloved wife, his eldest son being killed in World War I, another son's insanity and death from self-inflicted starvation, the wreck of a third son's marriage, and the loss of his ancestral estate and the bulk of his possessions.

He sustains his "mysterious and tranquil joy,"<sup>57</sup> not because he is unaware, like Colonel Blount in Vile Bodies, of what is happening around him, but because his treasure is where neither moths, nor rust, nor thieves can touch it. His values are different from those which appear to be most commonly held in the mid-twentieth century.

A conversation with Guy about his eldest son's, Gervase's, medal of Our Lady of Lourdes illustrates his values. When recalling that Gervase was killed by a sniper on his first day in France, Guy remarks that the medal had not protected him much. Mr. Crouchback takes a different view:

Once in London, when he was in training, he got rather drunk with some of his regiment and in the end he found himself left alone with a girl they'd picked up somewhere. She began to fool about and pulled off his tie and then she found the medal and all of a sudden they both sobered down and she began talking about the convent where she'd been at school and so they parted friends and no harm done. I call that being protected. I've worn a medal all my life.<sup>58</sup>

While an insurgent in "The Sexual Revolution" most probably would find such an attitude unpalatable, it has sustained Mr. Crouchback.

Another matter which illuminates the quality of Mr. Crouchback's charity is his dealings with the owners of his hotel at Matchett. In the early days of the war, when "management and servants had settled down to the simple policy of doing less than they had done before, for rather more money," and even the easy-going Major Tickeridge is distressed, Mr. Crouchback excuses the churlish behavior by saying: "I believe they're finding everything rather difficult."<sup>59</sup>

Later, Mr. Crouchback refuses to believe that the hotel owners are plotting to have his rooms requisitioned so that they might let them at a higher rate. After Jumbo Trotter, unknown to Mr. Crouchback, intervenes with the Quartering Commandant and foils the plot, Mr. Crouchback voluntarily offers



to give up his sitting room. The reaction of the hotel owners is a revelation of the materialistic mind and, indirectly, a further insight into Mr. Crouchback's charity:

"What do you make of that?"

"Maybe he's feeling the pinch."

"Not him. He's worth much more than you'd think. Why, he gives it away, right and left. I know because I've done his room sometimes. Letters of thanks from all over the shop."

"He's a deep one and no mistake. I never have understood him, not properly. Somehow his mind seems to work different than yours and mine."<sup>60</sup>

Mr. Crouchback reveals his intuitive grasp of the particularity of love relationships when he expresses his failure to understand why he cannot send his grandson Tony, who is in a P.O.W. camp, the articles the boy requests:

"After all, any present means that you want someone to have something someone else hasn't got. . . . I shouldn't wonder if the Government didn't try and stop us praying for people next."<sup>61</sup> And in his sharing of his limited supply of wine with virtual strangers and in the lecture he gives his Greek form on the proper location of a good house, he reveals his openness to all men and to the claim, in Christ, which all men have on him.

In the quality of his family pride he is the antithesis of Lord Marchmain: "That passion, which is often so thorny a growth, bore nothing save roses for Mr. Crouchback." It has made him tolerant and humble, expecting nothing from others; "while for himself, any virtue he had, came from afar without his deserving, and every small fault was grossly culpable in a man of his high tradition." He rejoices in the heroic deed the press makes out of Trimmer's farcical raid. When Mrs. Tickeridge complains that Trimmer's photograph is unattractive, Mr. Crouchback responds: "He looks what he is--a hair-dresser's assistant. And all honour to him."<sup>62</sup> That Trimmer is totally un-

deserving does nothing to alter Mr. Crouchback's tolerance. The real test of his family pride, however, is that he would never consider, as other men of ancient family might, that Guy should re-marry in order to propagate the line and hope to patch things up with the ecclesiastical authorities in the future. His family, first and foremost, is the family of the Faith.

A letter from Mr. Crouchback to Guy controls the resolution of the action and provides the meaning of Sword of Honour. Though greatly reduced in rhetoric and scope, the letter bears a markedly strong resemblance to St. Paul's second letter to Timothy: the writer's awareness of approaching death, an expression of concern for the spiritual welfare of the writer's son, an exhortation to be active, and the unprofitableness of wrangling over words compared to the true faith in Jesus Christ. The heart of Mr. Crouchback's letter reads:

When you spoke of the Lateran Treaty did you consider how many souls may have been reconciled and have died at peace as the result of it? How many children may have been brought up in the faith who might have lived in ignorance? But quantitative judgments don't apply. If only one soul was saved that is full compensation for any amount of loss of "face."<sup>63</sup>

In keeping with the Christian tradition--with its very heart in Jesus Christ himself--it is in death that Mr. Crouchback's words to his son bear fruit. Mr. Crouchback's funeral Mass is hugely attended, despite war-time restrictions on travel, and Guy and Angela receive hundreds of letters from recipients of their father's benefactions. These are, perhaps, surprising facts considering the quiet serenity of Mr. Crouchback's life, but as general effects of his charity they are a preparation for the great particular effect his life has on Guy. While the liturgy is being intoned, Guy's prayer turns to a review of the quality of his father's life. In this moment he reaches an awareness in a personal way of what his father had been trying to tell him:

he must ask from God, and "quantitative judgments do not apply." Guy realizes: "One day he would get the chance to do some small service which only he could perform, for which he had been created." He is able to pray to his father, as one now at home united with God: "Show me what to do and help me to do it."<sup>64</sup>

The "small service" is his taking back Virginia. It is an act of charity (love), a concern for the well-being of the unborn child and of Virginia. Only Guy can perform this act; Virginia tells him he is her last hope. Guy's acceptance of this service has far reaching effects.

The most immediate effect, one unlooked for by Guy, is that Virginia's conjugal attentions during the weeks of their cohabitation have a healing effect on his heart and pride. Before their reunion she arouses no great feeling not even sexual passion, in Guy. He makes it clear to her that the disastrous incident at Claridge's some three years previous had been a result of the Halberdiers and the war, not love.

An infinitely more important effect is that Virginia arrives at the end of charity, union with God. Her unconditional surrender to God is evidenced in her remark: "The whole thing is clear as daylight to me," and in the comment of her confessor: "Thank God for your good and humble confession." It is shortly after her confession that Virginia is killed by a buzz-bomb--a special act of God's mercy. Eloise Plessington, herself a convert and Virginia's baby's godmother, comments on Virginia's death:

There's a special providence in the fall of a bomb. God forgive me for thinking so, but I was never quite confident her new disposition would last. She was killed at the one time in her life when she could be sure of heaven--eventually.<sup>65</sup>

A matter closely related to Virginia's surrender to God, and one which throws a special light on the question of paternity, is the effect of Guy's

action on his Uncle Peregrine. Uncle Peregrine has been described as a bore of monumental proportions, one whose life had been ineffectual. Yet in the eleventh hour of his long and fruitless life Virginia tells him that it is really he who has brought her into the Church: "Just by being such a dear."<sup>66</sup> Peregrine's life is meaningful after all; quantitative judgments do not apply. He has a share in spiritual paternity, which was a commonplace concept in medieval times but is perhaps unfamiliar to the twentieth-century reader.

Guy's father was effective both as a physical and a spiritual parent. Guy's parenthood (except in some editions, which is a matter to be treated later) is also limited to the spiritual. Just how limited is it? Guy still has not arrived at a sufficient degree of self-knowledge.

While in Yugoslavia with the partisans, Guy comes to believe that another service he alone can perform is to aid a group of refugee Jews. He begins to envision himself another Moses, leading the Jews out from bondage. In a conversation which one critic has called "surely one of the most affecting passages in contemporary fiction,"<sup>67</sup> Guy admits to Madame Kanyi, the most intelligent of the Jewish refugees, his own complicity in the guilt of the war. With this admission he comes to the end of his crusade, but he has not, several critics to the contrary,<sup>68</sup> arrived at a completion of self-knowledge.

At the time of his climactic conversation with Madame Kanyi, Guy has already received his recall orders, so he knows that his desire to play Moses has been frustrated. Madame Kanyi's words are loaded with significant undertones for the reader who is aware of Waugh's ideas about exile and home as we have already discussed:

"There was a time when I thought that all I needed for happiness was to leave. Our people feel that. They must

move away from evil. Some hope to find homes in Palestine. Most look no further than Italy--just to cross the water, like crossing the Red Sea.

"Is there anyplace that is free from evil?"<sup>69</sup>

Metaphorically, home, the promised land, and crossing the Red Sea, signify the passing from the bondage of sin to the freedom of God's grace. However, in this world there is no freedom from evil; there is always--until the Second Coming--the Crucifixion.

For Guy, the crucifixion occurs when he discovers that his final gesture of compassion toward Madame Kanyl, giving her a pile of magazines, has resulted in her and her husband's execution. With his sense of the futility of inflicting personal violence on Gilpin, who tells him of the Kanyis' execution with gloating lack of compassion, Guy has arrived at a full knowledge of his limitations. As for his potential, that is realized in his return to Broome, the bringing up of Virginia's son, and marriage to Domenica Plessington. Guy's acceptance, as evidenced in these actions, which are reported in the final chapter by Arthur Box-Bender, indicate that his surrender to God's will is unconditional.

Is Guy's parenthood limited to the spiritual? As he had done in writing an alternate ending to A Handful of Dust and an alternate structure to Brideshead in the 1960 revision, Waugh has given his readers a choice in the matter of Guy's parenthood. The choice occurs in two sentences, spoken by the imperceptive Box-Bender, which appear on page 319 of two American (Little, Brown, and Company, 1961) editions of The End of the Battle. The first edition reads: "Now they've two boys of their own. When Domenica isn't having babies she manages the home farm at Broome." The third printing of this edition reads: "No children of their own, but that's not always a disadvantage. Domenica

manages the home farm at Broome." This latter is also the reading of the original British edition (Chapman & Hall, 1961). Sword of Honour, Waugh's final thought on the matter, reads: "Domenica manages the home farm at Broome. They've settled in the agent's house. Pity they haven't any children of their own."<sup>70</sup> While the "two boys of their own" does have something of the fullness of Job's final state to recommend it, it could vitiate the essential statement of the whole work.

One way of arriving at this essential, and final, statement is to ask what is the final significance of Guy's taking back Virginia and all that occurs as a result of his action in the largest metaphorical sense. It is not as Bernard Bergonzi has suggested that "Guy's heir represents a union, no matter how oddly contrived, between the Upper Classes and the People, and that he embodies, too, Mr. Waugh's final, infinitely reluctant surrender to the modern world."<sup>71</sup> There has simply been no preparation in the novel itself for such a reading. Waugh is not greatly concerned about "Classes," and there is no surrender to the modern world. What the whole novel has prepared for is something quite different.

While all that has been said about faith and chivalry and the related image patterns bears on the essential statement, perhaps the most overt preparation for the novel's final statement is given in Ambrose Goodall's story of a Catholic peer's marital complications. This is a tale in which a Catholic peer fathers a child by his ex-wife, who at the time is re-married to a non-Catholic. When he hears the story Guy is most interested in the legalistic justification it gives him for sleeping with Virginia, but he does say: "Mr. Goodall, do you seriously believe that God's Providence concerns itself with

the perpetuation of the English Catholic aristocracy?"<sup>72</sup> This is really the important question. Goodall is like the ludicrous oldsters of the early novels his affirmative response is not necessarily Waugh's.

The ironic reversal of the tale in Guy's own life is typical of Waugh's comic method. The novel's statement contradicts Goodall's; God is not interested in perpetuating the English Catholic aristocracy. What God's providence does concern Itself with is the perpetuation of His people, the family of the Faith, the Mystical Body of Christ. Waugh's answer--and there is nothing in any of his novels to contradict it--in its largest sense is the same as John the Baptist's: "I tell you, God has the power to raise up children to Abraham out of these very stones" (Matt 3:9; Luke 3:8).

Guy's surrender is to God, not to the modern world. Yet even the modern world is "charged with the grandeur of God," since the Incarnation brought for all time the news of home and how to get there. In surrendering unconditionally to God, Guy touches off a charge and becomes a newsbearer himself. The words which conclude Sword of Honour are more profoundly true than Arthur Box-Bender, the speaker, realizes: "Things have turned out very conveniently for Guy."

Sword of Honour confirms what Eric Linklater wrote about Brideshead: that under Waugh's many talents lies a conviction that "what really matters in life is the instance of holiness."<sup>73</sup> This is why neither Sebastian Flyte nor Tony Box-Bender should be regarded as examples of withdrawal. Once the good news of Christianity is accepted, a life of prayer offers the opportunity for a life of service to mankind as well as to God.<sup>74</sup> Who can measure the influence Sebastian's prayers had in the final happiness of his father, his sister Julia,

and his friend Charles? Tony Box-Bender's entering the monastery completes the picture of hope--not an optimistic picture in a worldly sense, but one of supernatural hope--which is the final effect of Sword of Honour. Guy, back at the home farm bringing up Trimmer's son in the Faith, and Tony in a monastery parallel the twin pillars of Christendom as Chaucer saw them: the ploughman and the priest. It is an appropriate conclusion to a "comic" novel of chivalry.



## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>POMF, p. 43.

<sup>2</sup>BR, p. 27.

<sup>3</sup>BR, p. 207.

<sup>4</sup>Evelyn Waugh, "Another and Better Ruskin," Spectator, CXVIII (July 16, 1954), 93.

<sup>5</sup>SH, p. 156.

<sup>6</sup>SH, pp. 307-08.

<sup>7</sup>SH, p. 375.

<sup>8</sup>SH, p. 530.

<sup>9</sup>SH, p. 189.

<sup>10</sup>SH, p. 792.

<sup>11</sup>While it is true that the Pharisees before Pilate spoke in the name of the People, they themselves were a privileged class.

<sup>12</sup>Evelyn Waugh, "The Jesuit Who Was Thursday," Commonweal, XLV (March 21, 1947), 561.

<sup>13</sup>SH, pp. 566, 560.

<sup>14</sup>"The difficulty in adequately explaining Ralph Brompton may come from Waugh's admission that "only writers like Mr. Graham Greene and Mr. Bernanos . . . who plumb the human spirit at depths where few venture, can create villains." ("The Jesuit Who Was Thursday," 560).

<sup>15</sup>SH, pp. 710, 703.

<sup>16</sup>SH, p. 711.

<sup>17</sup>SH, pp. 713-14.

<sup>18</sup>SH, p. 714.

<sup>19</sup>This is essentially Waugh's notion of human nature. He writes: "The failure of modern novelists since and including James Joyce is one of presumption and exorbitance. They are not content with the artificial figures which hitherto passed so gracefully as men and women. They try to represent the whole human mind and soul and yet omit its determining character--that of being God's creature with a defined purpose" ("Fan-Fare," p. 56). While in the abstract Waugh might respect the spirit of dedication of the partisan girls, he could only deplore the object of their devotion and the final effect that object has on them.

<sup>20</sup>SH, pp. 713-14.

<sup>21</sup>Again, one of Waugh's non-fiction statements deals more directly, if less humorously, with the matter. In reviewing Harold Laski's Faith, Reason and Civilization Waugh states that Christianity has said "'Ye will be happy hereafter,' and cannot be proved wrong (until Professor Laski's scholars set to work) while the former [Marxism] says, 'My dear comrades, you may not realize it, but you are happy at this moment.' . . . Marxism is the new opium of the people" ("Marxism, the Opiate of the People," Tablet, CLXXXIII [April 22, 1944], 200).

<sup>22</sup>SH, p. 497.

<sup>23</sup>SH, p. 759.

<sup>24</sup>Charles J. Rollo, "Evelyn Waugh: The Best and the Worst," The Atlantic, CXIV (October, 1954), 82, writes: "In the Catholic content of his novels to date, there has been little accent on religious experience as such and a really shocking absence of that human compassion which is so much a part of the Catholic spirit. . . . The Church is made to appear a particularly exclusive club rather than a broad spiritual force." Marcus, "Evelyn Waugh and the Art of Entertainment," 350-51, writes: "He wrote two pretentious novels about his religion, Brideshead Revisited and Helena, his most conspicuous failures. They failed because Waugh's snobbery and growing biliousness could not accommodate themselves to humane, religious impulses." O'Donnell, Maria Cross, p. 124, writes: "Brideshead Revisited breathes from beginning to end a loving patience with mortal sin among the aristocracy and an un-Christian petulance towards the minor foibles of the middle class."

<sup>25</sup>Carens, The Satiric Art of Evelyn Waugh, p. 96, states: "The Catholicism of Evelyn Waugh is rationalistic and anti-mystical."

<sup>26</sup>Evelyn Waugh, "The Heart's Own Reasons," Commonweal, LIV (August 17, 1951), 459.

<sup>27</sup>Helena, p. 137.

<sup>28</sup>Evelyn Waugh, "Felix Culpa," Commonweal, XLVIII (July 16, 1948), 324-25.

<sup>29</sup>Evelyn Waugh, A Little Learning (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1964), p. 33.

<sup>30</sup>Helena, pp. 132-33.

<sup>31</sup>Coleman, "No Room for Hooper," 187.

<sup>32</sup>Spender, The Creative Element, p. 173.

<sup>33</sup>Kermode, "Mr. Waugh's Cities," 68.

<sup>34</sup>Helena, p. 80.

<sup>35</sup>The extremely simple, almost stilted, diction of this quotation from Walker Percy's novel, The Last Gentleman (New York: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, Inc., 1966), p. 403, is admirably suited to Waugh's own view.

<sup>36</sup>Walker Percy's article, "The Message in the Bottle," Thought, XXXIV (Fall, 1959), 405-33, gives an excellent exposition of faith based on the essential difference between news and knowledge. I am indebted to this article for the help it has given me in formulating many statements on faith in this study.

<sup>37</sup>Waugh himself was well aware of the dangers attending the indiscriminate use of such a regrettably loose term. In reviewing Graham Greene's The End of the Affair he writes: "Mr. Greene often uses the term 'made love' to describe sexual intercourse. Normally that is an inoffensive euphemism, but here, where love is as often used in its high spiritual sense, there is an ironical twist in the phrase which frustrates the writer's aim. It is an artistic trap from which, once it closes, there is no escape" ("The Heart's Own Reasons," 458).

<sup>38</sup>An excellent discussion of this paradox can be found in the chapter entitled "Freedom" in Nicholas Berdyaev's Dostoevsky (New York: Meridian Books, 1957), pp. 67-68.

<sup>39</sup>ER, p. 340.

<sup>40</sup>BR, p. 316.

<sup>41</sup>BR, pp. 220, 332.

<sup>42</sup>Peter Hinchcliffe, "Fathers and Children in the Novels of Evelyn Waugh," University of Toronto Quarterly, XXXV (April, 1966), 298, remarks: "Vile Bodies is also of interest because it is here that Waugh makes the first of his persistent allusions to King Lear. . . . Lear, with its connected themes of madness, parental grief, and filial ingratitude, is a play that Waugh keeps returning to in his novels."

<sup>43</sup>BR, p. 334.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid.

<sup>45</sup>BR, p. 45.

<sup>46</sup>Dorothy Sayers, Dante's Purgatorio, Penguin Classics (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1955), p. 37.

<sup>47</sup>BR, p. 277.

<sup>48</sup>Saint Augustine, Confessions, translated by R. S. Pine-Coffin, Penguin Classics (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1964), pp. 211-12.

<sup>49</sup>BR, p. 279.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid.

<sup>51</sup>BR, p. 340.

<sup>52</sup>BR, p. 351.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid.

<sup>54</sup>Helena, p. 121.

<sup>55</sup>Waugh's point in Helena may be more important today than it was in 1950, with the great interest, especially on college and university campuses, in Eastern religions. Herman Hesse's pseudo-parable, Siddartha, makes a similar point in contrasting the historical nature of Christianity with atemporal Buddhism.

<sup>56</sup>SH, p. 39.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid.

<sup>58</sup>SH, p. 42.

<sup>59</sup>SH, p. 174.

<sup>60</sup>SH, pp. 300-01.

<sup>61</sup>SH, p. 288.

<sup>62</sup>SH, pp. 39, 40, 431.

<sup>63</sup>SH, pp. 546-47.

<sup>64</sup>SH, p. 604.

<sup>65</sup>SH, pp. 707, 718, 753-54.

<sup>66</sup>SH, p. 708.

<sup>67</sup>Walter Allen, The Modern Novel (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1964), p. 213.

<sup>68</sup>Allen, The Modern Novel, p. 213 and Bergonzi, "Evelyn Waugh's Gentleman," 35.

<sup>69</sup>SH, pp. 787-88.

<sup>70</sup>SH, p. 796.

<sup>71</sup>Bergonzi, "Evelyn Waugh's Gentleman," 36.

<sup>72</sup>SH, p. 135.

<sup>73</sup>Linklater, The Art of Adventure, p. 52.

<sup>74</sup>More than once in his non-fiction writing Waugh has expressed the modern world's need for prayer. In "Kicking Against the Goad," 534, he writes: "I believe that we are returning to a stage when on the supernatural plane only heroic prayer can save us and, when on the natural plane, the cloister offers a saner and more civilized life than the world." And in "The American Epoch in the Catholic Church," Month, ns., II (November, 1949), 306, he writes: "The Church and the world need monks and nuns more than they need writers."

## CHAPTER X

### CONCLUSION

This study has concentrated on an examination of Brideshead Revisited and Sword of Honour as Waugh's mature novels, the ones in which he realizes his greatest achievements as a novelist. They are mature novels because they represent man more fully than do his earlier novels, especially in portraying men in their relations to God. They are distinguished from Helena in their precise and richly evocative rendering of the mid-twentieth century scene, which imparts to them a greater verisimilitude and immediacy. Hopefully, this study has shown that both Brideshead and Sword of Honour are aesthetically satisfying in wholeness, proportion, and richness of texture. If the perfection of Sword of Honour's structural integrity is blemished by the disproportionate importance of Ludovic and by the concerns of art and the novel in its final third, the blemish is a minor one, more than compensated for by the greater comic richness these concerns bring to the whole.

To support the assertion that there is a basic integrity to Waugh's whole novelistic achievement and to arrive at some final evaluation of that achievement, we must recognize the idea of comedy which underlies his work.

Terms of literary criticism are perhaps even more fluid (tending to change shape to suit each different container) than are most other areas of vocabulary, and within literary criticism few terms seem as ambiguous and im-

precise as the term "comedy." Yet using such a term seems preferable to inventing a new one. The term "comedy," for all its imprecision is preferable to other available terms because historically it seems to be a larger, more general term than "humor," for example. Also, Dante's use of the word commedia is close enough to "comedy" to supply a basic meaning on which we can build.

The fundamental resemblance to Dante's Commedia found in Waugh's comedy is an affirmation of life--both temporal and eternal. Christ has conquered death, and death has no dominion over the man who believes in Christ. This belief is the foundation on which all of Waugh's comedy is built.

A second characteristic of Waugh's comedy, a corollary to its primary affirmation, is its humor. What is meant here by humor is perhaps best expressed by Coleridge in his search for "one humorific point common to all that can be called humorous":

[Coleridge believes that such a point] consists in a certain reference to the general and the universal, by which the finite great is brought into identity with the little, or the little with the finite great, so as to make both nothing in comparison with the infinite. The little is made great, and the great little in order to destroy both; because all is equal in contrast with the infinite. . . . I would suggest, therefore, that whenever a finite is contemplated in reference to the infinite, whether consciously or unconsciously, humor essentially arises.<sup>1</sup>

Waugh would undoubtedly replace the word "equal" with a word like "insignificant" but aside from that one qualification Coleridge's description fits Waugh's novels remarkably well.

The comparison and contrast referred to by Coleridge is most explicit and most finely wrought in Sword of Honour. At least four kinds of "finite great" are "brought into identity with the little": professional success, sexual conquest, heroism and altruism. Guy Crouchback is involved in all four

kinds of experience. Other characters provide multiple comparisons and contrasts with Guy: Apthorpe, Major Pound and Ian Kilbannock operate in the realm of professional success;<sup>2</sup> Trimmer in sexual conquest; Trimmer, Ivor Claire, and Ritchie-Hook in heroism; and Joe Cattermole in altruism. In all four areas of experience Guy's father gives witness to the presence of the infinite.

There is a mutation of humor, in Coleridge's use of the term, in Brides-head. Only on the periphery of the novel does his description apply: the three hardened sinners for whom the young Cordelia prays are Lloyd George, the Kaiser, and a girl who was dismissed from Cordelia's convent school. But in the novel's main action, while finite experience is at last seen to do nothing in comparison to the infinite, a considerable disparity remains between the finite great and the finite little. Charles and Sebastian's friendship, at least in its promise, is remembered as something finer than the relationship between Sebastian and Kurt; and Charles's and Julia's love for each other remains more satisfying than either of their unfortunate marriages.

In the early novels the "comparison with the infinite" is, at most, vaguely suggested. What can be felt in their extended portrayal of the vanity of all earthly desires is the need for something beyond, which is supplied in the mature novels. A logical development can be seen in Waugh's works, one which gives an integrity to his whole achievement in the novel.

A third characteristic of Waugh's comedy is its concern with a vitality which packs as much experience into life as possible. Waugh's early novels abound in this kind of vitality. The characters in these novels experience a wide variety of adventures--perhaps Grimes in Decline and Fall and Basil Seal in both Black Mischief and Put Out More Flags stand out as the most vital of



Waugh's early adventurers. None of the adventures of the characters in the early novels, however, provides lasting satisfaction. It is only in the Christian dimension of the mature novels that a supernatural vitality operates, one which confers lasting meaning on all vitality.

While it is true that the whole of Waugh's fiction asserts that only holiness, conforming oneself to the will of God, is really important and only he who is aware of his own ridiculousness as he stands before God's mercy is capable of achieving holiness, still Waugh's comedy effects two distinct kinds of laughter. The first results from the finite great being brought low, and it occurs with great frequency and in many tonal varieties. The other, a rarer but more lasting kind of laughter, comes from the sense of well-being evoked when sympathetic characters, fully acknowledging their own limitations, realize (most scandalous of all realizations) that God cares about them and in spite of everything offers them a share in His life. This second kind of laughter need not be voiced, but it is evident in the characters who evoke it: Sebastian is a beloved joke to the novices in the North African monastery; Charles looks cheerful; Virginia in her last days spreads a glow over a far wider circle of acquaintance than she had in her heyday as a golden daughter of fortune; and Guy's final happiness is the envy of his brother-in-law.

But Waugh does more than illuminate the proper end of life; his comedy speaks forcefully and, to some readers, convincingly about the process of life. If soaring in ecstasy or groveling in anguish is what a reader demands, he had better look elsewhere; Waugh is neither ecstatic nor anguished. Friendship, comradeship, a steady affection, not less profound for being a staying, rather than an explosive experience, are what Waugh gives his readers. He presents us

with the possibility of a civilized world, a Christian civilization in which suffering born in patience brings the benediction of grace, and joy is accepted in quiet gratitude. Waugh renders such a civilization as a real possibility for the individual even in the Dark Ages coming upon us. The individual Christian can extend, limited though his range of effectiveness may be, the family of the Faith; and he can, by adhering to the virtues of civilization, lead a civilized life. Courtesy, honor, and tolerance without weakness may not be obvious in this world of ours, but, as Guy Crouchback proves, they can be found with effort. And one need not have a university degree or other official certification to enjoy literature, painting, food, and wine. One does not even need a lot of money to enjoy these things, but one might need a modicum of humility, patience, and good humor to enjoy them properly. Waugh's quality of life, in even the most limited circumstances, is more than merely livable, it is enjoyable.

At any time to convincingly render life as being enjoyable is an achievement, but if Waugh's novels were to be compared to the rest of twentieth-century fiction in this regard, his achievement might be regarded as a considerable one indeed.

Waugh's meaning should generally be acceptable and heartening to Catholics, Protestants, and Jews who are aware of their exile; but to those who do not believe they are exiles, Waugh's full meaning, especially in his mature novels, even if it is recognized, is likely to have little appeal. As Guy Crouchback put it: "All differences are theological differences."<sup>3</sup>

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Lectures Upon Shakespeare and Other Dramatists in The Complete Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, ed. by W. G. T. Shedd, IV (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1884), 278.

<sup>2</sup>Ludovic and Everard Spruce are examples of professional "success" in the arts who contrast to Waugh's success in Sword of Honour itself. Their "success" is godless, while Waugh insists on the necessity of God for real success.

<sup>3</sup>SH, p. 699.

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APPROVAL SHEET

The dissertation submitted by Harry Patrick Costello has been read and approved by members of the Department of English.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given final approval with reference to content and form.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

1/13/69  
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